THE QUEST OF LIFE

CHARLES R. BROWN

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THE QUEST OF LIFE

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THE LATENT ENERGIES IN LIFE

THE QUEST OF LIFE

BY

CHARLES REYNOLDS BROWN

DEAN OF YALE DIVINITY SCHOOL

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TO THE GOOD FRIENDS IN THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF OAKLAND CALIFORNIA WHERE FOR NEARLY FIFTEEN YEARS I ENJOYED THE HIGH PRIVILEGE OF PREACHING TO A MOST APPRECIATIVE CONGREGATION, I DEDICATE THESE SERMONS, IN GRATITUDE AND AFFECTION

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A FOREWORD

THE publishers asked me for a group of sermons dealing in the main with some one common interest. In my other books I have followed a somewhat different line from the one taken here. "The Main Points" is a study in Christian belief. "The Social Message of the Modern Pulpit" deals with the application of religious principles to industrial conditions. "The Cap and Gown," "The Young Man's Affairs" and "The Modern Man's Religion" were written chiefly for college students. "Faith and Health" discusses the immediate utility of mental and spiritual forces in gaining and keeping a more complete and reliable physical efficiency.

The sermons in this volume have been selected for their bearing upon personal religion. I shall be glad if they help to light the way for the open mind and resolute heart into a finer experience of those aids to right living which come from a world unseen. They all have to do with "The Quest of Life."

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I

THE QUEST OF LIFE

"Seek ye the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added." — LUKE XII, 31.

I

THE QUEST OF LIFE

THE quest of life — it 's "what all the world 's a-seeking." People everywhere want to see life. They want to know life. They want to possess life. They are eager to feel themselves alive — alive at all points, alive in the most effective and enjoyable ways.

The novel is read by the many, the scholarly essay by the few, because people feel that the story shows them life in a more direct way. The theater makes a wide appeal and the thoughtful lecture a narrow one because people feel that the play on the stage shows them life. The cheap moving-picture show lords it over the art gallery in popular interest because in the former the pictures seem to have life — they move. Everywhere it is the same. The people want to see life, to know life, and to possess life. It is the universal quest.

Now there is One who is competent to direct us in this quest. "In him was life." However it came about, whatever our theological presuppositions may be, we all recognize the fact that in him there was life without qualification, life abundant, life eternal.

He had an abounding physical life. We do not read of his ever being ill for an hour. He moved about diffusing health. He took the sick, the crippled, the leprous by the hand fearlessly and lifted them up.

He had presence and personality. He entered the temple and finding it full of noisy, dickering, cheating traders rose up in his indignation and drove them out single-handed. It requires some personal force to drive a lot of Jews out of a place where they are making money. When he was at Nazareth the people were angry because he had rebuked them. They sought to thrust him over the edge of the cliff. But he calmly passed through their midst, overawing them, and went his way. Not a man of them dared touch him. When the chief priests sent their officers to arrest him the men came back empty-handed. "Why have ye not brought him?" They could not. When Pilate examined him and found no fault in him, he cried out, "Behold the man"—Pilate had never seen a man before. When the final crash came the scribes and Pharisees did not dare to lay hands upon him until they had skillfully secured the backing of the Roman government on the trumped-up charge of treason. He had presence and personality. "In him was life," and men stood in reverence before that august manifestation of "life."

He had mental life. He saw clearly; he spoke as never man spake. He lived before the age of printing; books there were none and

manuscripts were scarce, yet he uttered sayings so profound that nineteen centuries of thinking have not as yet dropped their plumb-line to the bottom of them. He uttered the final word touching many important interests. He said the governing principle of social life should be this, "Love one another as I have loved you." That leaves nothing more to be said — it is a final word. He said the goal of moral aspiration was to be this — "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Here also is a final word. He spoke of that widespread, age-long habit of prayer and said, "When ye pray, say 'Our Father.'" We are children at home in our father's house; the ultimate force in the universe is parental in character. We are to take that attitude and hold it. Here also is a final word on the subject of prayer. He knew what was in man, what was in all these varied human interests, and needed not that any should tell him. His mind was alive and rich.

He had spiritual life. He challenged his enemies, "Which one of you convicteth me of sin?" No man did; no man could. His life was stainless. "I do always those things which please the Father," he said. It was no passive, pallid innocence which he showed — it was a positive, massive, militant type of goodness. "I come to do the will of him who sent me," — and he did it. He could say boldly to the noblest man and to the purest woman, "Follow me." In all the centuries

since human aspiration has never reached the point where it felt impelled to turn away from him toward some more perfect embodiment of the ideal. He claimed to manifest the divine — "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." And the highest thought of God the human mind and heart have ever grasped has been the thought of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" manifested in terms of his own matchless life. "In him was life," — life complete, abundant, eternal; and to this hour that life is the light of men.

He will be competent to direct us in our quest of life. Let us ask him then what it means to live.

In the passage where the text stands Jesus indicated plainly the folly of seeking life in the contents of a building. "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully." He was embarrassed by lack of room to house his good things. He decided to pull down his barns and build greater. When he had filled those big barns to the eaves with good things he said to his soul, "Take thine ease; eat, drink, be merry — thou hast enough laid up to last for years."

The foolish man thought that life could be gained from the contents of a barn, or a bank, or some such building, provided only it be large and well filled. God called him "a fool." When he awoke in the clearer light which followed upon that night when his soul was required of him, he called himself "a fool." The

thoughtful part of the world to-day calls him "a fool." No man can gain life by possessing himself of the contents of a big building.

There are two reasons for this — first, the material is not adequate. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth." Life is not made of things. It uses them. The Heavenly Father knows that we have need of certain things, food, raiment, shelter and the like, but life transcends all these. The millionaire is not necessarily possessed of life because he owns more food, more clothes, more houses, more things generally than any of the rest of us. His real life does not consist of the things he can buy and own. Man lives by bread, but not by bread alone, be it ever so abundant. If the bread should become cake and wine, terrapin and canvas-back duck, with all the other luxuries conceivable, still the man could not live by these alone. Men may build their buildings and pull them down and build greater. They may fill these buildings to the eaves with things laid up for many years, but the fact stands that life is not sustained solely nor mainly by things.

Here are two people who find the sweetest joy in life in a certain rare companionship. In an ascertained congeniality of mind, in a satisfying sympathy of purpose, in an ennobling affection which has come to possess their hearts, they find life which is life indeed. They may possess ten barns, or two, or none; they may possess an abundance of

things or just enough for their needs; in either case their entrance into life is independent of the scale of their possessions. When they are together and know the touch of life on life with its blending of interest they have bread enough and to spare. And whether that sense of fellowship is between two finite spirits or between a finite and the Infinite Spirit there is something enjoyed which utterly transcends the world of things. Look not for life in the contents of a building — you will not find it there.

Furthermore, our tenure of things is too uncertain for us to find real life in the contents of a building. When the foolish man had built his big barns and filled them, this word came — it always comes — "This night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall *those things* be?"

Whose indeed! He had staked his life on a collection of things. Now, in one brief hour, they were gone! They were no longer his.

"How much did he leave?" one man asked another as they took their seats in the car. "He left all he had," was the reply. If that were actually true, then his life was a tragedy. He may have had things in abundance, but if that was all he had, if he lacked those qualities of mind and heart which alone have permanent worth, if he had made no accumulation of Christian character, if he had written no record of unselfish service, his life was a tragedy.

Alas for the man who is compelled to leave all he has, for our tenure of things is insecure!

There is only one form of possession where our tenure is sure. There is only one thing which no man is ever compelled to leave behind, and that is himself. He takes his own qualities of mind and heart, his own measure of character, his own record of usefulness or the reverse with him wherever he goes. That single fact becomes his highest reward or his sorest penalty. No man is good company for himself permanently unless he is a man with the peace and the promise of Christian faith.

We read that "Judas went out, and it was night." It was always night from that hour, whenever and wherever Judas went — for Judas. It is a terrible thing to have a traitor in the room. There was always a traitor present wherever Judas went. He left his thirty pieces of silver behind, but he took the traitor with him into the unseen world. The tenure of things is insecure: the only sure hold that any man has is upon his own inner life as it lies open to the eye of God.

There comes an hour — it is not far away for the youngest; it is there at the door for some of us — when all that any man is worth is the good he has done and the character he has won. No matter what Bradstreet says. Though the chamber of commerce may adjourn on the day of his funeral and all the flags of the city fly at half-mast, all that the man is worth is the good he has done and the character he has

won. And that is the real worth of every man all the time. It is all that any man is worth at any time.

Therefore, because that hour cometh and now is, it is the part of wisdom to do good; follow him; provide bags that wax not old; lay up treasure where neither moth nor rust, neither thieves nor disease break through. In a word, be rich toward God if you would have life which is life indeed.

In the second place, Jesus indicated the futility of an anxious, fretful quest of life. "Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall wear. The life is more than meat; it is more than raiment. Consider the ravens, they neither sow nor reap, yet God feeds them. Consider the lilies, they neither toil nor spin, yet God clothes them. Are ye not much better than they? Your Heavenly Father knows that ye have need of all these things. Therefore be not anxious," in your quest of life, "neither be ye of doubtful mind."

How strange those words sound when we take them at their full face value! I am not thinking now of those poor unfortunates to whom existence is a daily, hourly struggle. I am thinking of those who are fairly well to do. Be not anxious! Why, some of you are worried within an inch of your lives over these questions of food and raiment with the present cost of living. What shall we eat? How much of it and how costly shall it be? How expensive shall we make the dining-room where we

eat it, and the kitchen where it is prepared? How much shall we spend on the linen and the china, the silver and the cut glass we use in getting it down our throats? How many servants shall we keep to cook it and to serve it? This question of eating and of getting the bills paid is a tremendous question! We cannot treat it as of small importance, as if we were so many ravens. We live in a state of chronic anxiety over this matter of eating, with all its implications.

"What shall we put on?" And what is still more vital, how will it look when we get it on? How numerous and how costly shall our garments be? What shall be the style and make of them? How much of ornament — jewels, feathers, ribbons, and what not — shall we add for our further beautifying? And what shall we wrap around ourselves in the way of houses, furniture, and all the other trappings of life — for a man's house is merely a garment which he wears at night and in the winter, when it rains, and whenever he is indoors. In a word, how costly shall this whole outer shell of ours be made? Many people are kept on a constant tension, wearing themselves out before their time over this question, "What shall we put on?"

The Master saw this fret and fuss. He therefore undertook to turn men's minds away from that which is secondary to that which is primary. What shall I eat? It is a necessary question, but it is secondary. There is an-

other question to be answered first. The primary question is, Am I worth feeding? Is it important that I should be kept alive? Does the world particularly need a man of my type? The life is more than meat. The question as to the quality of the life takes precedence over the question of meat to feed that life.

What shall I put on? If I am going into society I must put on something. But that question also is secondary. Is it important that I should go? Will society be any happier, any wiser, any better because I am there? This is the primary question. The inner life is of more importance than all questions of raiment. Therefore Jesus said in effect, "Be not anxious in your quest of life what ye shall eat and wear — seek first that which is fundamental."

In the third place he indicated the true principle for the attainment of real life. "Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added." Now just what does that mean? Not in theological patois or in ecclesiastical dialect, but in plain English, what does it mean?

The kingdom of God is not a far-away celestial state of reward to which a few people go when they die. It is not an ecclesiastical enclosure over here somewhere, quite apart from the common interests of food and clothing, inhabited solely by a few people of pietistic habit. It is not a subtle, peculiar style of personal experience to be attained only by a few rare

temperaments. The kingdom of God stands for that whole section of life which owns and obeys the sway and rule of the divine spirit manifested in Jesus Christ. That is the kingdom of God! It is personal and it is institutional; it is visible and it is invisible; it is present as a moral achievement, and it lies in the future as an ultimate ideal. That entire section of human interest which strives to obey the spirit which was in him constitutes the kingdom of God.

Now in your quest of life seek that! Seek it first in your own heart. Seek it at all those points where your life impinges upon the lives of your fellows. Seek it, if you are an employer, in the treatment of those other lives which are bound up with yours in that enterprise which enables you to eat and drink. Ask yourself point by point as you make up your mind about wages and hours, about the conditions of employment and the distribution of values, what the rule of the divine spirit would mean here. Seek it in the place and part you hold in the whole organized life of the community. In all those common relationships which are the warp and woof of human existence say to him, "Thy kingdom come"—come here, come now! "Thy will be done here as it is done in heaven." For as surely as God lives, if you seek that sublime quality of life, you will find; and all things needed will be added.

To seek the kingdom of God is to live out

the law of one's own being. It is to fulfill the deeper purpose of human existence. It is to attain self-realization on higher levels and in fuller measure. And when any man seeks the kingdom of God by living out the law of his own being in personal and social terms he makes his quest of life successful.

Jesus announced this fundamental principle and then proceeded to illustrate it. He pointed to the birds and the flowers. Consider the ravens, they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, yet God feeds them. Consider the lilies, they neither toil nor spin, yet Solomon in all his glory was never so well dressed as one of these wild flowers. How much better are ye than they! Why then are ye anxious?

You have heard beautiful sermons preached from this passage. Young men in white ties held before you the loveliest ideals. They told you to "consider the lilies." The lilies neither toil nor spin; they neither fret nor fuss — they just "grow." And you thought of the utter futility of trying to put that into practice. You thought of going to your place of business with its thousand cares, or to your housekeeping with its thousand and one cares, or to your schoolroom full of restless urchins not eager to be educated but looking upon you as the common enemy, or to your complaining patients full of their whims and conceits! What could a lily, neither toiling nor spinning but avoiding all fret and fuss, accomplish there!

And in the face of the demands made you decided that the principle would not work. You decided that you could not be a lily and accomplish your task. And you threw the young man's sermon and the lovely picture in this passage out of the window. You regarded it as a bit of sentimental idealism, uttered by some oriental dreamer, and entirely unsuited to this busy, bustling world of ours.

But you missed the point! The lily does not toil nor spin. It was not made to toil and spin. It does the things it was made to do. It lives out the law of its being; it fulfills the purpose of its creation; it attains to its own self-realization; it seeks the kingdom of God.

The lily is not idle. It reaches down steadily with its roots into the soil that it may claim its nourishment. It opens its leaves to the rain and dew. It looks up into the face of the sun for the light and warmth needed for the flowering forth of its own inner beauty. It lives out its lilyhood, not fretfully but energetically, and God clothes it with a beauty which Solomon in all his glory never reached. Out of the black mud where it grows the lily forms a flower white and fair which the loveliest woman might wear for her adornment.

The ravens do not sow nor reap. They were not made to sow and reap. They feel no mysterious impulses within impelling them to build storehouses and barns. They do the things they were made to do. They live out the law of their being. They fly to and fro, keen of

eye and swift of wing; and when they seek in this way for their self-realization, in the great abiding order which enfolds them, they are fed. They live out their ravenhood, not fretfully nor anxiously, but with a serene trust, and God feeds them.

Here, then, we have a principle capable of universal application! Live out your manhood; live out your womanhood! Do the things you were made to do. Be true to the law of your being. Seek your self-realization on the highest levels. You will not leave off toiling and spinning — you were not made to be lilies. You will not give up sowing and reaping — you are not meant to be ravens. You will labor six days wisely and usefully, doing all your work — it is the command of God. You will rest and aspire one day in seven — this, too, is the command of God. And when men and women thus live out their manhood and their womanhood, intelligently and conscientiously bringing their lives personally and socially into harmony with the purpose of God for them, they may live without fret or worry. They may live in the sweet assurance that in the great abiding order which enfolds them they, too, will be fed and clothed. They will indeed be fed with that bread which comes down from above and be clothed with that righteousness which is the fine linen of the saints. Seek first the kingdom of God and all things will be added.

The final ground of our assurance in this

quest of life is the good will of the Eternal. "Fear not, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." He finds his supreme joy in aiding you in the attainment of your highest and holiest desires. When any man is faced wrong he has the moral universe against him. When he is faced right he has the moral universe to back him in his venture.

You are eager to see life and know life and possess life. If you will enter upon that high quest striving for the rule of the divine spirit in all the round of daily experience, striving to live out the law of your being, you may share in the untroubled serenity of the birds and the flowers. Seek first the kingdom and you will enter into life, free and joyous, abundant and eternal.

II

WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

"Rabbi, where dwellest Thou?
He saith unto them, Come and see."
— JOHN 1, 38, 39.

II

WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

YOU are frequently asked, especially if you happen to be away from home, "Where do you live?" Some one is trying to locate you. He feels that he might understand your life better if he had you related to some set of facts with which he is already familiar.

You name some city, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, as the case may be. You have not answered the man's question. It may be that was all he wanted to know, but his question suggests a great deal more than that. Now as a matter of fact, where do you really live? Two men may reside in the same city and yet live as far apart as the North Pole and the South Pole. Two men may reside on the same street or in the same house and yet have a whole continent between. It is not a question of geography. You cannot tell where any man lives by looking at the map or in the city directory. You must examine the contents of the man. It is a question of his own dominant interest. In that deeper sense, where do you really live? Where are you at home? Where may I address you and be sure of reaching

you? It is a vital question. If every one would stand up and tell us exactly where he lives it would be more interesting and more profitable than any sermon ever preached.

You said a moment ago that you lived in Chicago. What is Chicago? A place on the map? A collection of buildings there on the west shore of Lake Michigan? That is not Chicago — that is where you will find Chicago. But Chicago itself is a vast array of human interests, a bewildering complexity of hopes and fears, longings and yearnings, aspirations and resolves. There are ten thousand different Chicagos, some of them high and fine, some of them low and mean. In what particular Chicago are you at home? Where in all that mass of interest and activity are you rooted, grounded, naturalized, domiciled? You see how this question "Where do you live?" goes down to the root of the matter. It finds every man, as we say in the common phrase, "right where he lives."

It was so when the question was first asked there in my text. John the Baptist saw a majestic figure coming down from the north. He saw Jesus of Nazareth taking his first steps in that service which has changed the moral history of the world. And when he saw him approach he said in reverent tones, "Behold, the Lamb of God! He is taking away the sin of the world!"

Two of John's disciples heard him speak and they followed Jesus. And as they saw in his

face the glory of the Eternal, as they heard the accents of power fall from his lips, as they felt a strange, mysterious influence stealing in upon their hearts while they companied with him, they began to wonder where he lived. They wanted to locate him in this whirling complexity of interest. They wanted to relate him in definite fashion to that world of experience which they knew. And they said, "Rabbi, where dwellest thou?" It was the same familiar question — "Where do you live?"

Where did the Son of man live? In what part of the world; in how much of the world? In what part of the world and in how much of the world does any man live? The philosophers tell us that each man's impression or perception of the world is the only reality there is in the case for him. The only world that exists for me is the world that I personally can see and hear and feel, the system of reality with which I stand related, to which I make response. There may be ten thousand other worlds, but if they do not enter into my personal consciousness they do not exist for me. Things only become real to me as they enter into my own immediate experience.

When we view it in this light what an endless variety of worlds there are! What different impressions are made upon individuals by this system of reality around us and above us and beneath us! The beauty of form and color is not in the blind man's world — rainbows and sunsets do not exist for him. It is

all as though they were not. Melody and harmony are not in the deaf man's world. He lives in a world of unbroken silence. The overture to Tannhäuser or the fifth symphony of Beethoven, the songs of the birds and the laughter of little children have no meaning and no existence for him. They are not in his world. The spiritual values, forces and activities do not exist for the man who is dead or indifferent to them all. They are not in his world. In every case the presence or the absence of a certain faculty determines the range of reality for that particular man — it determines whether his world shall be large or small, rich in content or meager.

What sort of a world do you live in? How much of the world do you live in? It depends not so much upon what is outside of you as upon what is inside of you. What are your powers of perception and appreciation? What is the range of reality to which you stand related? To how many different forms of stimulus do you make response? At how many points, on how many levels do you react? This is what determines the real content of each man's world. Some man may reside, so far as his postoffice address is concerned, in the most favored spot on earth and yet live all his days in a place as uninteresting as Jersey City.

Let me illustrate in homely fashion: I take my dog with me into the Dresden gallery. He sees all that I see, physically speaking. He

probably sees a great deal more, for his eyesight is better than mine: he has never had to succumb to the indignity of glasses. But when we come out, after visiting every room, the Sistine Madonna is not in the dog's world. It is in my world. It has been in my world ever since I saw it for the first time twenty years ago. I see it, I feel it, I rejoice in the inspiration of it even as I stand here. But the dog might live out all his days in the Dresden gallery and never see it. The Sistine Madonna would not enter his world. It is not a question of eyesight but of insight. It is the mind that sees more than the eyes.

It is only six feet, more or less, for any of us from one world to the other. Here we are with our feet on the ground, of the earth, earthy. Here we are dust of its dust and destined to make return. Here we are with our heads among the stars, in a world of vision, aspiration and high resolve. And this world where our minds go is as real as the streets and the lanes where our feet go. In which world are you most at home? Where does your mind go when it is free to do not what it must but what it likes? Where does your heart go in its prevailing moods and desires?

You have cellars in your homes, stored with coal and provisions, but you do not live down there. You have kitchens where food is prepared, and dining-rooms where it is tastefully served, but you do not live there, I trust. You have living-rooms, as we say, and libraries,

with opportunities innumerable for intellectual and social enjoyment, but you cannot live by these alone. Unless you have in your home and in your life an upper room facing squarely upon the sky, looking out upon a horizon bounded by nothing nearer than the stars and the being of God, you are not living in the world for which you were intended. Give me then your full address — and by your definition of the world you live in, I shall know the quality of your life.

How many different worlds there are for the men we meet in daily life! Here are four men! The first man lives in a stream of commodities. His world is a river of things to be bought and sold. Now it flows this way and now it flows that way, but always in such a way as to turn the wheels of his mill and grind him out a grist of profits. He lives in that stream of commodities as a trout lives in the brook. He eats in it, sleeps in it, dreams in it, works in it, seven days in the week. He is never out of it for an hour, from Monday morning to Sunday night. Talk to him on any other topic than that of trade and you find him as dull as a pine stump. He feels sure that a man's life does consist in the abundance of the things he can buy, a certain eminent authority to the contrary notwithstanding. And this is the world he lives in: it is the only world he knows.

Here is another man who lives in a world of books, ideas, judgments. He is interested in

outlooks, insights and discriminations. He knows ten times as much about Plato and Aristotle, who have been dead two thousand years, as he does about Mr. John D. Rockefeller, who is very much alive. In his world the quotations and transactions have to do with the truth, and particularly with that form of truth which sets men free from blindness and evil. He strives to keep his credit good by keeping his eye single, that his whole moral nature may be full of light. He feels that wisdom is the principal thing, that its value is above rubies; and he strives with all his getting to get understanding. And that is the sort of world he lives in.

Here is a third man who lives in a world of distrust, suspicion and insinuation. He rejoices in iniquity more than in the truth. He smacks his lips over any fresh bit of it which comes his way. He prides himself on his freedom from all illusions and enthusiasms. "They are all devils," he says; "they all have horns and hoofs hidden away under their clothes and conventionalities." He feels that he is simply a smarter devil than the rest. He says with a sneer, "Every man has his price," knowing that he has his price. He is cold, cynical, disagreeable, untouched by those generous enthusiasms which fire the hearts of his fellows. He lives in that world which Dante saw when he wrote the "Inferno." This man could write a description of the Inferno himself as accurate as a Baedeker. And this world of cynical

distrust is the only world where he feels at home.

Here is another man whose head is full of visions and dreams of better things. He lives in a world where everybody is kind and good, hopeful and helpful. He is all that: he thinks people generally are, as indeed many of them are when he is present. He carries with him an atmosphere which stimulates the best in every life. He carries the atmosphere which Forbes Robertson carried into the boarding house in Bloomsbury in "The Passing of the Third Floor Back." It is an atmosphere which has a wholesome effect upon the selfish and the sluggish, encouraging them to be kind and good, hopeful and helpful. This man appraises everything in terms of spiritual value. To him it is all property, real and personal, possessed of worth unspeakable. He has religion, not as a history of something that happened a long time ago, not as a remote theory about things, not as a piece of stately ritual. He has religion as an experience, as a life. He lives in a world where God the Father is above all and in all and through all things. And this is his world.

How far apart these four men seem when we look at them! Yet they may all reside in the same town and on the same street. Now and then they may meet for an hour at the baseball game or in the theater or at church. They seem for the moment to have a common interest. But the meeting breaks up and each

man goes his way. Each one returns to his own particular world and goes sailing along through space like the earth on its orbit.

The sky is a roomy place; the sun, the moon and all the stars are there, each one moving on its appointed way without touching any of the rest. The world of human life is a great, wide, roomy place; there is a chance for every conceivable type. And each man builds up his own particular planet of being, his own sphere of action, by the relations he sustains, by the values on which he sets his heart, by the forms of action into which he enters. He builds his own planet of life and then moves with it on his own selected orbit through this universe of interest. Where in all that world of infinite variety do you dwell? How much of that world of reality, seen and unseen, has become real to you?

But let me return again to the original setting of the text. The two men asked Christ where he lived. "Rabbi, where dwellest thou?" Speaking after the manner of men, he did not live in much of a world. He was born in the manger of a stable. He was brought up in the home of a carpenter at Nazareth. When I was in Nazareth a few years ago they showed me the house. It may not have been the identical house — I have no idea that it was — but it was some such humble affair, for his people were poor. When he grew up and entered upon his active service going about doing good, there were times when he had

nowhere to lay his head. He accepted hospitality when it was offered, sometimes by rich men like Zacchæus, sometimes by the fairly well-to-do, like Mary and Martha, and sometimes by those who were as poor as himself. When nothing offered, he slept out and ate the raw wheat which his disciples plucked in the fields. When he came to die he did not die in a bed — he died on a cross and his body was laid in a borrowed tomb. When you study the record of his life it seems to lack any worthy setting. It was a rough world for him to live in. The foxes had holes and the birds of the air had nests, but the Son of man was without worthy residence.

But where did he actually live during all that time? I wish I could tell you. It would make this sermon forever memorable. I could not possibly put it in words. No man could. He who spoke as never man spake could not put it in words. He would not even try. When men undertook to locate him in this complexity of interest and activity, you remember his reply. He did not name a certain city or town. "Rabbi, where dwellest thou?" Jesus answered, "Come and see." Come and live in my world! Come and live in it for a day, for an hour, and then you will know! It was the only way they could know. The greatest things in life cannot be described — they must be seen and felt and experienced at first hand.

He did not undertake to describe the world he lived in but he gave us several significant

hints. He lived in a world where he could say at any moment, "I am not alone, the Father is with me." He had unbrokenly the sense of divine companionship. He felt that he was allied with the Infinite. He claimed kinship with the Eternal. He might be walking through a crowded street, the people thronging him; he might be asleep in the hinder part of a boat; he might be addressing a multitude from the hillside; he might be alone at prayer on the mountain top. It mattered not — he was not alone; the Father was with him. He had unbrokenly that sense of an exalted fellowship.

He lived in a world where he could say, "I come not to do mine own will but the will of him that sent me." He had the sense of mission. He did not live by mood or whim. He did not dash aimlessly here or there on any passing impulse. He was building his life finely and steadily into a far-reaching, divine plan. He was shaping his course with reference to a purpose which reached from the hour when the morning stars sang together on to the day when a victorious host shall stand before the throne singing the song of moral achievement. He was making himself at home in those great moral processes which are to bring the city of God, the ideal social order, down out of heaven and set it up in active operation on this common earth. He had a plan, a purpose, a goal, and he steadfastly set his face toward the great fulfillment. "I come not to do mine own will but the will of him who sent me." He

lived in a world where he had the sense of mission.

He lived in a world where he could say to all the lives he met, "I am among you as one who serves." He was ready and able to do good to every life that came within the length of his cable tow. It mattered not whether the life was rich or poor, cultured or simple, sinful or saintly, he was there as one who served. Out among the Gentiles it was not so. There the great ones exercised lordship and dominion. But in Christ's world, if any man would be great he must serve; and the greatest of all must be the servant of all. He once took a towel and girded himself that he might wash the disciples' feet. He prepared himself for that particular act of service. But the spirit of service he never put on because he never took it off — it was always there, as much a part of him as his own right hand. It was as much a part of his world as the power of gravitation. He took upon himself the form and the spirit of a servant becoming obedient to the exacting demands of an exalted usefulness.

What a world for the Son of man to live in! What a world for all the sons of men to live in! Take those three sides of the triangle and think of what they enclose! The sense of divine companionship, the sense of mission, and the spirit of service! And this does not exhaust the content of the world where he dwelt. I have only pointed to the sun, the moon and one of the principal stars. If we should undertake

to indicate the entire glory of that world which he saw around him in the unrealized capacity of this human nature for spiritual advance and in the fullness of that divine help upon which he relied, we should need all the angels in heaven singing at once and all the wise men on earth speaking at once and every created thing become vocal to bring out the full content of that world which Jesus saw. He had nowhere to lay his head, but he lived in a world of surpassing beauty and of glory unspeakable.

Words fail us in the face of that prospect! It was because he felt himself unable to describe what he saw and felt and enjoyed that Jesus said to his questioners, "Come and see." We can easily repeat those three sentences — "The Father is with me; I come to do the will of him who sent me; I am among you as one who serves" — but if we would know the world to which they point we must live in it. We must climb its mountains of spiritual aspiration. We must traverse its valleys of spiritual peace. We must eat the ripe fruit which grows on the tree of life and drink the water which flows clear as crystal from the throne of God. Come and see! Then you will know! Live in the mood and after the method of Christ and you will know where he lived.

How much of a world did his most illustrious disciple inhabit? "I am a citizen of no mean city," Paul said. Did he mean Tarsus? That was where he came from — "Saul of Tarsus." Yes, he meant Tarsus — his own Tarsus. There

were as many different cities of Tarsus as there are cities of Chicago. There were thieves and harlots in Tarsus — Paul was not a citizen of their city. There were mean men in Tarsus, men who were unkindly and ungodly — Paul was not a citizen of their city. He was a citizen of his own Tarsus, and that city was not mean.

His ultimate citizenship, however, was not in Tarsus but in a realm of moral purpose and spiritual ideals. "Our citizenship is in heaven." And that city of moral purpose and spiritual ideals to which he owed his final allegiance is a city which can be set up anywhere, at Tarsus or Ephesus, in Corinth or in Rome, in New York or in Shanghai. And it is for every man to build for himself that city to which he gives his final allegiance. He frames it up out of the principles by which he lives, from the values upon which he sets his heart, from the realities to which he stands intimately related. And when that city is well built it is "no mean city," it matters not on what spot of earth it may happen to stand.

The outward setting of any man's life is of small moment. When Oliver Goldsmith was so poor that he could scarcely get bread to put in his mouth he had a room below the level of the street. He was taunted with it on one occasion. Some brute said to him, "You lodge in a basement." Instantly came the stinging retort, "Your soul must lodge in a basement."

You cannot tell where a man lodges by watch-

ing the outside of him. The body may be born in the manger of a stable. It may issue forth from some provincial town like Tarsus. It may see the day when it can afford no better place of residence than a basement. What of it? The inner life may, in the hour of its strength, stand forth like a king in his kingdom. The inner life may claim and hold its citizenship in heaven. The inner life may open its lips and make the world its debtor by the sweetness of its song. The question as to what place on the map you hail from does not interest me. I do not care whether you have two rooms in your house or twenty, or twice that. But where do you, as a child of the Eternal, find yourself at home? That question is fundamental.

How splendid it is that it is always possible for us to move! In this outer world it may not be so. You may not like the city you live in or the street you are on or the house you occupy, yet you may be powerless to change it. Your whole environment may be distasteful to you, but you are compelled to settle down and make the best of it. But when we come to the dwelling-place of that inner life we are all pilgrims and sojourners as our fathers were. We can always move.

It may be done right here, without dust or noise. You need not send out for the furniture van. You can do it yourself by your own choice and resolve. If you have an uneasy feeling that the world you have been living in for

months, for years it may be, has not the breadth or depth or height suitable for the residence and growth of a soul, then move. Move out! Move up where you belong! Move into a world where the best that is in you can stand up straight because the ceiling is high! Move where you can strike out and not come at once into contact with some restraining wall! Move up where you can breathe your native air as a child of the Eternal.

The world where the religious man lives is a large world, but the religious life is not easy. It is the most difficult life there is, and the most rewarding. There is an upper level of spiritual privilege which towers above the common grind as the Matterhorn towers above the valley of the Rhone. But to reach it involves a stiff climb. You can do it if you will. No weight of years or bodily infirmity need detain you here. No long remove from such vantage grounds as are found in the Alps, the Andes and the Sierras need hinder you — the path of spiritual ascent is not far from any one of us.

But if you would go aloft you must go in marching order. Lay aside every weight. Lay aside the sin which doth so easily beset us. Strip off every evil purpose and intent, every shred of spite or bitterness or ill will. Then by your own personal faith, rope yourself in with the Guide and Helper of man's life, the Lord Jesus, and climb! And when you stand on that higher level breathing the air you were

meant to breathe and lifting your eyes to the heights whence cometh help, you can say to every man who asks your residence, "I live in a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

III

THE VISION OF GOD

"I have seen God." — GENESIS XXXII, 30.

III

THE VISION OF GOD

THIS is a tremendous statement! Who makes it? Some ripened saint dwelling apart from the world, unstained by its evil? Some wise philosopher long accustomed to think hard upon that which is fundamental and absolute? Some noble woman, with her keener spiritual intuitions, her moral nature alert and sensitive? Who is it that ventures upon this bold statement — "I have seen God!"

It was none of these — it was a practical, hard-headed business man. You will easily recall the scene described in that passage where the text stands. A man named Jacob had been wrestling all night at Jabbok Ford with a mysterious antagonist. He was a man of affairs and practical to the thirty-third and last degree. He had been living with his feet and his eyes very much upon the ground. He had begun his career by trading off a cheap mess of pottage for a valuable birthright. He played a clever trick on his aged father to obtain a blessing which carried with it the rights of primogeniture. He manipulated the flocks of his employer Laban so skillfully that at the termina-

tion of their contract Jacob had the larger part of the flocks and Laban a period of very instructive experience. Jacob was nothing if not practical. And he had been so successful that now he was returning to his old home with oxen and asses, with flocks and herds, with manservants and maidservants, and a very great household. "With my staff I passed over this Jordan and now I am become two bands." And this practical man of affairs stood there at daybreak saying, "I have seen God!"

The place where he gained this vision is also suggestive. It was not in some noble temple where lofty arches, stained glass windows and religious music woo the mind into an attitude of reverence. It was not at some point of great natural beauty like Glacier Point in the Yosemite or Inspiration Point in the Yellowstone, like Zermatt looking toward the Matterhorn, or Darjeeling facing upon the Himalayas. In these situations the sheer magnificence of the outlook lifts the mind toward the Infinite. Jacob had his vision on the banks of an insignificant stream at a lonely spot called Jabbok Ford. The situation was entirely commonplace — there was nothing in the setting to assist religious sentiment. Yet there on the dead level, with his flocks and his herds about him, this practical man felt moved to say, "I have seen God."

His experience will be instructive to us. We live in an age intensely practical. We are occupied six days in the week, not to say seven,

thinking and talking about flocks and herds, mills and mines, farms and factories, stores and railroads. We are busied about things to eat, things to wear, and all the other things necessary for this elaborate life. Meditation, contemplation, adoration seem to be crowded out of many a heart. There is neither time, nor room, nor the mood to see God. The language of devotion is not the tongue in which we are born. We talk glibly about bargains, investments and gains; about matter, substance and energy; but in the language of spiritual reality, we are awkward. If any man or woman should suddenly rise up and say, "I have seen God," it would sound queer and remote. It will be worth while then to ask how this man of affairs gained his vision of the divine.

He saw God first of all in the retribution which was about to overtake his wrongdoing. Twenty odd years before he had cheated his brother. He had cheated him out of his birthright and out of his blessing, with all the privileges which went with them. He had been compelled to leave home to escape the wrath of that brother whom he had wronged. He had prospered in Haran, for he had the Hebrew facility for getting on. He had made his "pile" and was now returning home with all his gains and blushing honors thick upon him.

But when he drew near to the borders of Edom, where Esau lived, he recalled that old resentment and was afraid. He sent a conciliatory message to Esau, couching it in orien-

tal phrase, demeaning himself and exalting the one he would appease. "*Thy servant* Jacob has tarried with Laban until now; he has oxen and asses, flocks and herds, and he has sent to tell *my lord,* Esau, that he might find grace in his sight."

Jacob's messengers came back with the report that Esau had already taken the field. He was marching toward Jacob with four hundred armed Bedouins. Then Jacob was greatly distressed. He divided his flocks and his herds into two bands so that if one was attacked the other might escape. He selected a present of camels and cows, of sheep and goats, and sent it ahead to Esau, hoping to buy off his wrath. Then, having taken every precaution possible and feeling how inadequate it all was, he fell down and prayed. "O God of my fathers, God of Abraham and God of Isaac, I am not worthy of the least of all Thy mercies. With my staff I passed over this Jordan and now I am become two bands. But deliver me I pray Thee from the hand of Esau, lest he smite me and the mother with the children." In that approaching retribution, which he knew he richly deserved, he saw the hand of God.

When you suffer because you have done wrong, rejoice in that fact. It shows that you are still alive; you can suffer as you would not if you were morally dead. When retribution overtakes you because of some wrongdoing, give thanks. It shows that there is a God in Israel who regards you as worth

saving. He is rebuking and correcting you that he may bring you into right relations with himself.

The great moral order is not far from any one of us. It is not indifferent to any one of us for an hour. The dark cloud of retribution approaching because of some sin is an indication that the God of righteousness takes thought for the deeper interests of every life. The solemn fact, that "the way of the transgressor is hard," standing unaltered either by the Revised Version or the Higher Criticism, is a steady testimony to the truth that God is with us and for us, arraying himself against the evil which would harm our lives. When he smites you because you have done wrong, look up as Jacob did and say, "I have seen God." You will see him in that very opposition which evildoing encounters.

If any man could succeed permanently in escaping the consequences of his own wrongdoing, it might go far toward making him an atheist. He might say, as the wicked man said in the Psalm, "Does God know? Is there knowledge with the Most High? Where now is thy God?" If in any quarter wickedness should succeed in permanently defying the moral order, then God would cease to be God in that realm. "Be sure your sin will find you out," in some form of penalty. What a man sows, he reaps. Sometimes the harvest comes in four months, sometimes in four years, sometimes in forty years. It always comes. Know

that God will bring into judgment all these things, whether they be good or bad. If human experience, taking it by and large, has taught us anything, it has taught us that. And in the very opposition which evil encounters, sooner or later, clear-eyed men see the hand and the love of God.

It was his profound faith in an abiding moral order where God lives and reigns, which caused Abraham Lincoln to say in one of the dark hours of the Civil War, "Fondly do we trust and fervently do we pray that this war may cease. But if it should be decreed that all the treasure accumulated by the unrequited toil of the bondman should be sunk and that every drop of blood drawn by the lash should be paid by another drop of blood drawn by the sword, even then we would still be moved to say, as it was said three thousand years ago, 'Thy judgments, O God, are true and righteous altogether.'" We incurred that fearful loss of treasure, of blood and of national prestige, because we had done wrong. And in all that fiery penalty and discipline through which this nation passed in wiping out the sin of slavery, men of insight saw the hand of the Almighty.

Take it in an individual case: Here is a man entirely absorbed in making money! He has allowed money to become, not a useful and obedient servant, but an imperious master. He has reached the point where he eats and drinks, thinks and plans, dreams and lives in terms of material gain. He need not be surprised if

certain hard lines appear in his face, marring the gentler look of sympathy and kindliness once there. He may find himself becoming indifferent to the interests of weaker men whose hopes are crushed by those commercial energies which he has helped to create. The human values at stake in this huge business of production, transportation and exchange may be utterly obscured by the financial values which to him seem all-important.

He need not be surprised if the standards of his home are materialized until the old interests of worship, aspiration and Christian service fade out. His own sons may shame him and wring his heart by their utter lack of those finer qualities which he manifested at their age. When he sees this process of judgment in operation, let him know that God does not leave himself without witness anywhere. There is a God in Israel and in New York, who does not allow a soul to go down in ultimate spiritual defeat without repeated warnings. Watch for them, as Jacob watched that night for the approaching Bedouins! And when you see that inevitable opposition to your own mistaken course of action say, as Jacob did, "I have seen God."

In the second place, Jacob looked into the depths of his own soul and saw there the spirit of God prompting him to seek moral renewal. He felt that night that his name was wrong — it meant "Supplanter"; it told the ugly story of his life. He felt that his nature was wrong

— it was mean, tricky and selfish. He had been ready to purchase material prosperity at the cost of any moral scruple which might stand in the way. He had been ignoring the interests of those other lives which were sacrificed to his advantage. He felt that his purposes were wrong — he was trying to buy off his brother's anger with a present of camels and cows, when he should have been on his knees before God confessing his sins and on his knees before his brother imploring forgiveness. He was wrong all the way up, all the way down, all the way in. And there in the darkness of that night, as he struggled with his mysterious antagonist, we hear him say, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." In his own sense of the need of moral renewal, he felt the disturbing presence of God.

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness" — happy is their condition! God is working in them to will and to accomplish his good pleasure. Blessed is the man whose soul is athirst for God, for the living God, yearning after a satisfying sense of fellowship with the Unseen! Happy is his lot, for God is manifesting himself to that man. The Lord has made us for himself and our hearts are restless till they rest in him. The divine spirit goeth where he listeth, awakening appetite for the bread of life as well as supplying it to need already conscious. When any man feels a profound discontent with his own inmost life, let him rejoice. If he will look

deeply into that yearning which will not down, he will be moved to say, "I see God face to face."

When the missionary goes to the darkest section of Africa, he finds the black people happy and contented. They show a larger measure of content than the people he left behind him in America. They are naked, they are ignorant, they are superstitious, they are immoral, but they are as contented as trees.

He begins to teach them and to preach to them. Then they begin to develop discontent. The black man, like the Prodigal Son in the far country, begins to be in want. He wants a shirt, for he feels an awakening sense of modesty in the presence of these white people. He wants a book, for his mind has been aroused and he desires to learn. His heart is possessed by finer affections and he wants a home — he is not content to live in the open, or in some rude corral; he wants decent appointments for his family life. Then his awakened soul turns from the ugly fetich he has been worshiping and he wants God. The whole story of his advance is a story of unfolding need. When he looks back over that period when he began to be in want, he interprets it as Jacob did. He attributes his own awakened aspiration to the presence of the divine spirit in his life.

May we not interpret the moods of our own day in this same manner? Has there ever been a time in the history of the world when there was so much wealth and so much pessimism

in the very nations which possess the largest portion of the wealth? Has there ever been a time when there were so many opportunities for pleasure and so many sad-eyed, heavy-hearted people? And the source of this pessimism and discontent is not in the surroundings, nor in the possessions of these people — it is in themselves. They need to be changed. They need to learn that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things that he can buy.

The Lord of life enters these troubled, fretted souls, that they may have life more abundantly. He makes them conscious, through their own unrest, of their need of inward renewal. The old doctrine of conviction of sin was not preached more solemnly by Jonathan Edwards than it is being preached to-day by men of strange lips and with another tongue. Thomas Hardy and Israel Zangwill, Henrik Ibsen and Bernard Shaw are preaching, in words that burn, the need of inward renewal. They seem unable to point the way of regeneration, but they make clear the fact that spiritual renewal is needed on the Avenue as much as in the slums.

Pitch your tent some night at Jabbok Ford and in the quiet of that hour take stock. Turn your eyes away from the flocks and herds, away from the stocks and the bonds, and count up your inward possessions. Ask your mind where it goes most easily and readily, when it is released from the things it must do, and is free

to go where it will. Ask your heart what are its prevailing moods, when it is alone and unhindered. Ask your soul how far faith and hope and love are vital energies within you. Ask what sort of grip you have on those unseen verities which alone may be trusted to maintain us in the full zest and relish of life when the evil days come. Take stock of those values which are inward and spiritual!

When you have done that with unsparing candor and thoroughness, it may be that some of you will feel as Jacob did, that all these flocks and herds, all these outward possessions and successes are at the mercy of the Bedouins, who may be even now projecting an attack. If you have not been laying up treasure beyond the reach of moth and rust, beyond the reach of disease and death, you will feel in that hour as helpless as this man of old. And if you look deeply into that discontent you will find there the presence of the same divine spirit, disclosing to you your own spiritual poverty. When any man faces his inmost need in that serious mood, he is moved to say, "I have seen God."

Finally, in that grave hour, Jacob saw the One who could work that change. Early in the evening he felt that he had only Esau and his Bedouins to reckon with. He felt that in some way he might appease their wrath, or ward off their attack. But as the night wore on he felt that by his course of selfishness and dishonesty he had been defying the whole unseen world. He had been pitting his puny strength

and cunning against the whole moral order. He had been putting up his arms to fight the Almighty. Now that opposition stood athwart his path like a physical antagonist. He wrestled with it all night long until the breaking of the day.

But as the hours passed that mysterious presence in the dark became not a mere antagonist opposing his evil course. Jacob felt that he was dealing with One who sympathized with his need of a new nature. He felt that he was looking into the face of One who could accomplish that high end. We hear him say in his moral stress, "Tell me Thy name." He would not allow that experience to pass until he had discovered its deeper meaning. He would not let that Presence go until he had been blessed. He had stolen a blessing in early life which had profited him little. Now he will gain a higher form of blessing by the might of a new purpose, by the consecration of his powers to nobler ends.

He did not let that Presence go until it had blessed him. When the day dawned he felt a strange joy in the new life within his soul. He called the name of the place "Peniel, the face of God," for he said, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

He wrestled all night with the treachery and meanness of his own heart. He wrestled with the evil impulses he was trying to cast out. He wrestled with that mysterious antagonist who sets himself in opposition to every evil way.

But still more, he wrestled with that spirit of grace which is ever at hand to lift off the sense of guilt, to renew the springs of action and to change the inner life. And when Jacob became conscious of this contact between his own finite spirit and the Infinite Spirit of grace he felt that he had seen God face to face.

One of the widely read religious books in the last decade was "Varieties of Religious Experience," by William James. His main contention was that when men are honest with themselves, they discover that there is something wrong in their inner lives. They discover further that this wrong can only be righted by making new and more satisfactory adjustments to the higher powers. In a word, the philosopher insisted that peace comes only as we grasp the Unseen One who opposes our wrongdoing and makes us conscious of our need of renewal, saying, "We will not let Thee go except Thou bless us." The serious man discovers God in those profounder phases of his own inner life. He there finds the One who is altogether righteous, the One who alone can righten us.

"Lord:
Make me to hear clearly one thing,
Thy Voice,
And hearing, to follow, respond,
And rejoice.
Make me to see clearly one thing,
Thy Way,
And seeing to walk at Thy hand
Day by day.

Help me to seek only one thing,
Thy Face,
And seeking, Thyself to reflect
Through Thy Grace."

The modern man's vision of God comes mainly in terms of spiritual process. He does not think of God as a majestic figure like the Statue of Liberty seated on his great white throne. He does not think of God as an Infinite Being dwelling somewhere apart from this life of earth, directing it by a system of wireless communications. He thinks of God as the indwelling, sustaining, directing presence, in all these processes, visible and invisible, which make up the universe. He feels that God is to be known and enjoyed mainly as we touch the deeper levels of human experience.

He is "the living God." He lives a real life, a striving, militant, conquering life. He faces the evil of the world consequent upon the wrong exercise of human freedom and fights against it. He finds himself thwarted in his plans by the unresponsiveness of this human material. He seems at times to be baffled by the perversity of the human will, but the struggle goes on. He bides his time and devises fresh ways of resisting the sin of the race, looking always toward moral victory. The struggle costs him pain — our doctrine of atonement tells us that. He comes blood-stained from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah. There is an eternal heartache and heartbreak over the sin of the world. When any man recognizing

the deeper meaning of this everlasting struggle between light and darkness, between good and evil, enlists in this struggle himself, he enters at once into fellowship and coöperation with that living God. He rises to that level of experience where he sees God face to face.

Rejoice that his dwelling-place and your dwelling-place are not apart. "In him we live and move and have our being." In us he lives and moves, accomplishing his purposes and achieving the joy of fatherhood. Bravely and gladly accept that community of interest which belongs to the life of the child and the life of the Father, as they find themselves in joyous accord. Call the name of the place where you enter into that experience "Peniel." When in the presence of evil you feel the restraining hand of the moral sense, when you feel a discontent prompting you to seek spiritual renewal, and when you find yourself ennobled by your fellowship with the Eternal, you will rejoice in that you have seen God and your life is preserved.

IV

THE CITY THAT LIETH FOUR SQUARE

"On the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, on the west three gates." — REVELATION XXI, 13.

IV

THE CITY THAT LIETH FOUR SQUARE

THE kingdom of God is pictured as a magnificent city. It has "walls great and high." "The kings of the earth," the ruling forces of human society "bring their glory and their honor into it." It has broad streets, and through one of them flows "the river of the water of life, clear as crystal." There are trees growing on either side of the river, bearing their ripe fruit every month, and with leaves for the healing of the people. The men who live in this city walk and work in the light of God's presence. In all that they do "they serve Him day and night." "His name is written in their foreheads;" their very faces reflect the character of the One they serve. They rejoice that "their names are written in the Lamb's book of life;" they are registered citizens in an everlasting kingdom. And the whole life of the place is so filled with the glory of God as to make it shine like a cluster of jewels.

And it is such an accessible place, this kingdom of God! Three gates open day and night,

on every side! "On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates." It faces every way. It has three gates fronting squarely on every conceivable human interest and on every style of temperament. If a man stands on the north side he need not make his way around to some other side of the city to enter. He need not wait to get some other man's point of view. He need not delay until he experiences the particular emotional reactions which some other man enjoyed. If he will only stand up where he finds himself, put evil behind him and face toward the light, he may, by moving straight ahead, enter into the kingdom of God. He will find a path as plain as a pikestaff leading straight into the love and service of the Most High.

This many-sided city is a picture of the manifold expressions of God's moral interest in men. It is a picture of the varied provisions made for divers lines of approach to the Christian life. The gateways of the kingdom open in all directions that they may serve the varying needs of men.

We are not all required to enter the Christian life in exactly the same way. We could not if we would. It has not pleased the Almighty to make human beings like clothespins, to be counted off by the gross and packed in bunches. There is never a soul in all the earth which is the exact counterpart of any other soul. We do find twins, physically speaking, but they are

never alike in temperament and disposition. Esau and Jacob were twins, but they were as unlike as William H. Taft and Theodore Roosevelt. Every human soul possesses its own individuality. This endless variety makes it necessary that the lines of approach to the deepest things in life should be many and varied. "On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates."

Let us think of what those gates signify! We will look first at the east gates. The east is where we watch for the sunrise — the day begins there. It is the realm of beginnings. It is the home of that which is new, fresh, unworn. In a word, the three gates on the east front upon the childhood of the race.

Above each one you find a text inscribed, a veritable word of the Lord. Over the first, "He took a child and set him in the midst." Over the second, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Over the third, "A little child shall lead them." The kingdom of God is easily and readily accessible to the boys and girls. The parents and the teachers of the world rejoice when they see those three gates opened ever toward the east.

This fact has an important bearing on the great interest of Christian nurture. We are sometimes asked if it is necessary for children reared in Christian homes to be converted. It certainly is, — every one must be converted in

order to enter the kingdom of God. And for such a child conversion means the conscious, deliberate acceptance for himself of that mode of life to which he has been reared. When his attitude toward Christ is no longer mere custom or habit into which he has been led by those who love him, but his own glad, voluntary choice as well, then that new attitude constitutes his conversion. It is the conscious turning of the soul toward the mercy and the service of God. The coming of that conscious personal decision may occupy a few vital moments in some spiritual crisis in the child's life or it may stretch through months or years of growth. It matters not — whenever the voluntary turning of the soul to God and the joyous acceptance of his service as the highest mode of life arrive the child enters through his own gate into the city.

Have our friends, the Roman Catholics, built those east gates more solidly and more wisely than have their Protestant neighbors? We feel that the content of Christian faith and life, as they present it, is faulty, but they have been wise beyond a peradventure in keeping those east gates open for the children day and night. The Roman Church owes a large part of its influence to the clear, strong emphasis it has placed on the work of Christian nurture.

The wise minister of Christ spends much of his time and thought and love on the east side of the kingdom. He goes out to greet the boys and girls, the young men and maidens, as they

come up from the land of the sunrise in all the fresh vigor of their youth. He keeps himself in sympathetic touch with their moods and needs. If he can make the Christian life seem real and true, with never a note that is forced or artificial or perfunctory in his presentation of it, he will win them. We are just scratching the surface of the possibilities to be revealed when we enter into the full meaning of these better methods of religious education and of Christian nurture. When we have learned how to face youth aright with the fullness of the Christian message, those three gates on the east will be thronged with boys and girls, bringing their unwearied energy into the life of the kingdom.

"And on the south three gates!" The south is the place of warmth. It is the realm of feeling. The men of the north, the Scotch, the Scandinavians, the Russians, never show that warmth of feeling found among the Spaniards, the Italians, and the Greeks. Here at home the people of the South, white and black, possess a fervor in their sympathies, in their sentiments and in their enthusiasms which Northern people lack. If we go farther into the tropics this warmth of feeling, when it has not been mastered by intelligence and moral purpose, becomes a serious problem. But there, fronting upon that sunnier side of human nature, is the southern exposure of this four-square city, with three gates inviting warm-hearted men and women into the love and

service of God. Over the first is written, "Out of the heart are the issues of life." Over the second, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Over the third, "My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God."

This element in human nature has been oft abused. There are men and women who live in a chronic state of religious excitement, in a perfect whirl of emotional fervor, yet their moral perceptions are frequently confused. They make us feel poverty-stricken when it comes to a show of feeling, yet they are not always able to tell the truth or to show themselves quite honest in money matters. We would not call them liars and thieves, but their ethical sense is surely overborne by this excess of emotion.

Sometimes these highly colored temperaments undertake to lord it over the rest of us who live in the temperate zones — the great temperate zones, which, after all, transact the serious business of life, for neither the tropics nor the arctics have written the most important pages in the history of the race. These ardent natures, capable of profound dejection on account of their sins, and capable of corresponding elation over their sense of deliverance, sometimes speak slightingly of the experience of those who, in less striking ways, find their entrance into the kingdom of God. They may almost shut the door in the faces of those who make their approach to the Christian life without a proper show of feeling.

All this I know well, but still the heart has its rights. Where feeling is officered by intelligence and turned into channels of useful service, the more feeling the better. We cannot have too much of it. Would that we might stir men more deeply with a feeling of the awfulness of doing wrong in the sight of him who loves us! Would that we felt more profoundly the meanness of insulting God's purpose for us, by open defiance or by flat indifference! Would that we all might experience more deeply the everlasting joy of entering into conscious fellowship with our Maker for the accomplishment of high ends! Would that we all might rise to the peace and serenity which possess the life hid with Christ in God!

This is not logic; it is not ethics; it is not philosophy; it is religious feeling. We are here indicating phases of personal experience in the deep things of God. Would that we had tenfold more of it in all our churches! Out of the heart, out of the hopes and fears, out of the sentiments and devotions, out of the aspirations and enthusiasms, come the mighty issues of life. And there are three gates on the south side of the city to welcome these generous impulses into the life of the kingdom.

It seems clear that our Methodist friends have surpassed us in this form of religious culture. The average congregation of Methodists will sing a hymn more effectively than would a similar number of Congregationalists.

They sing better, not because they are better musicians, but because they have more religious feeling. They are steadily adding to their stock of religious feeling by their ready participation in Christian song.

Matthew Arnold said, "Religion is morality touched with emotion." He touched lightly upon a vital truth. When any moral principle is caught and held within the grip of those mighty sentiments, awakened by a direct vision of the eternal verities, giving more august sanction to the right and uttering more terrible warning against the wrong, the strength of that principle is multiplied by ten. When the righteous man is made conscious of his coöperation with the will of God, his own purposes are mightily reënforced. He rises by faith and by feeling into a sense of participation in a vaster and more enduring moral enterprize. And ample provision is made for those deeper emotions of life by three gates opening toward the south.

"And on the north three gates." These gates front upon a colder quarter. They open toward a region of cool intelligence. The impulses of hope and belief are carefully scrutinized. The philosophies of life are here definitely wrought out. The singing may be less hearty; the exhortations are not so loud; the flags which fly have less color in them, and the drums may not beat. But withal, it is a region where a deal of quiet, serious, honest thinking takes place. It is a section of human

experience not to be lightly esteemed; it has its own intrinsic moral worth. Facing upon it there are three gates. Over the first is written, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Over the second, "I am the truth, and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Over the third, "Study to show thyself approved unto God."

The great majestic order where we stand is grounded in reason. Every added century deepens man's confidence in this fundamental affirmation. The only life which can justify itself is the life become rational and righteous. Fellowship between the finite spirit and the Infinite Spirit is natural and imperative, where men order their lives in the light of the Supreme Intelligence. It was this clear fact which led President Eliot to say to the boys at Harvard, "Prayer is the transcendent act of human intelligence." The greatest thing that any mind ever does is to pray.

Gird up the loins of your mind, and think seriously upon the fundamentals, the being of God and the fact of duty, the high privilege of prayer and the moral achievements of redemption, the hope of a future life and the certainty of a final judgment! You were meant to know these things.

"Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord!" The Almighty himself stands at the north gate inviting us to match up our conceptions as to the meaning and value of human existence with his. He invites us to

hold high conference with him, touching the august interests of life. Our ways may not be his ways, nor our thoughts his thoughts, but this lack of agreement is not meant to be permanent. It is to be the unending effort of moral aspiration to achieve harmony between our human thought and the divine purpose. We are to strive for the sense of agreement between our ways and his ways. It is neither presumptuous nor futile to make this high attempt, for on the north there are three gates inviting the ripest judgment of the human mind into the love and service of God.

It may be that as Congregationalists we have made our best showing on this side of the city that lieth four square. We have not been lacking in the power of direct appeal, for three of the greatest evangelists America has produced, Jonathan Edwards, Charles G. Finney, and Dwight L. Moody, were all of them Congregationalists. But we have given the larger part of our strength to the work of instruction and persuasion.

We have entrusted our interests, for the most part, to the slow, irresistible processes of education. How many Christian colleges have been founded by the people of our faith and order! Harvard and Yale, Williams and Dartmouth, Amherst and Bowdoin, Oberlin and Beloit, Grinnell and Whitman, Wellesley and Smith, Mount Holyoke and Mills with a score of other similar institutions. They were all founded by Congregationalists! We have made

our main approach to the inner life with the reasonableness and the winsomeness of the truth.

If we should fail to make as strong an appeal to the emotional life as do some of our fellow-Christians; if we should not impress men equally from the æsthetic side by noble architecture and stately ritual; if we should lack something of the strength which belongs to close-knit and highly organized polity, we might still find ourselves useful in presenting clearly and cogently the august claims of the truth. And fronting upon the north, the region of calm and cool reflection, there are three gates to welcome thoughtful souls who wait there into the life of aspiration and service.

"And on the west three gates." These gates front toward the sunset. When we look that way we see that it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. The fresh, uncertain promise of childhood has ripened into some sort of fact. The heat and burden of the day has been borne and night is coming on when the stars will shine.

It is the side of life which all men and women regard more seriously when they find themselves growing old. They are thinking of the time when their work will be done and they will be ready for the rest which remains for the people of God. Here, as elsewhere, there are three gates — the kingdom of God, with all its hopes and helps, is still accessible. Over the first gate is written, "At evening it shall

be light." Over the second, "The hoary head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness." Over the third, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." And through these wide gates men who have walked and worked for many years are entering with joy into the kingdom.

Some of you have lived longer than I have. You have walked farther, you have seen more, you have suffered what I have not. The colors which your youthful associates once knew are fading out of the hair, the cheek, and the beard. The fire in your eye burns low and more softly. In the nature of things it may not be long until you will hear the sunset gun. But I have it upon the word of Jesus Christ — and whose word would you rather trust than his? — that no matter how long or how joyously you have lived, there is before you, if you will have it so, an eternity of high privilege. In the face of such a possibility, there can be no more serious obligation than to set one's house in order, to adjust one's aspirations to the highest ideals in sight, and to lay hold confidently upon those sources of divine help which men have tried and found good.

I lived for many years beside the Golden Gate in California. It opens toward the west. I have seen the sun set in it a hundred times. I have seen the great ships, the *Manchuria,* the *Mongolia,* the *Siberia,* the *Korea* — the very names of them indicative of our points of contact beyond that widest sea —

sailing in and out through that Golden Gate on their way to and from the harbors which lie on the other side of the globe. And I used to think of those three gates into the kingdom of God which open toward the west. The affectionate interest of the Saviour of men looks out through each one of those gates upon lives grown mature without having entered openly into his service. Those men need to come in. They need him. If they would come in they would feel secure when the hour comes for them to set forth upon that wide sea which men cross in only one direction — they would be safe with him as the captain and pilot of their souls.

"Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

"But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

"Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark.

"For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar."

"On the west three gates" — three Golden Gates!

The paths of approach, the modes of access to this new life in Christ are many and varied. The gates of entrance are widely distributed to meet the needs of people varying in temperament, in point of view and in experience. You need not box the compass in order to find the particular gate where some other man entered into Christian life. You need not travel around three sides of the city to find the place where John Bunyan, or some other illustrious saint, went in. You may begin now, right where you stand. Put behind you every purpose inconsistent with the Christian life — that is repentance! Accept gladly the forgiveness of God offered in Christ for the wrong you have done — that is faith! Then go forward along the line of that new purpose in fellowship with him — that is life, which is life indeed! The moment you do that you will see straight ahead of you a gate wide open into the city of God.

How rich and how varied are the appeals which God makes to men! How wonderful his love and his interest in all his children! We have narrowed it by our petty definitions and by our sectarian approaches. The city of God is large enough to contain all the children of God, and the modes of entrance are as varied as their differing needs.

The light of heaven, as it streams from the sun, is one white light. At the first glance it seems colorless. We do not suspect its rich and manifold content until we pass a ray of it through a prism and spread it on the screen in

a dark room. Then we behold all the colors of the rainbow in that one ray of white light.

But the flowers knew. They grew together on the bosom of mother earth; they all blossomed in the white light of heaven. Yet the roses are red, the violets blue, the buttercups yellow. Each bud selects out of that white light of heaven its own particular shade and reproduces it in terms of its own individual beauty. So the pure, warm love of God shines from the skies upon all the children of men. Let each man respond in his own way, taking his own particular color in the pattern and making his own contribution to that garment of righteousness which shall enfold and adorn the race.

V

THE POWER OF REQUEST

"If thou knewest . . . thou wouldst ask . . . and he would give." — JOHN IV, 10.

V

THE POWER OF REQUEST

YOU could hardly call it a promising situation. The two principal figures in the scene stood too far apart. He was a man, she was a woman — and in the Orient that means a gulf fixed. His disciples marveled that he talked with a woman in a public place. He was a Jew, she was a Samaritan — and the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. Race prejudice and religious bigotry had dug a yet deeper gulf. He was the sinless Son of God, she was a woman openly immoral, living at that hour with a man who was not her husband. Her own wrongdoing had widened that gulf into a chasm of separation.

The only thing they seemed to have in common was the fact that they were both thirsty. The Master began on that narrow bit of common ground. When he saw the woman filling her water-pot he said to her courteously, "Give me a drink."

She instantly twitted him with the fact that his necessities prompted him to do an unheard-of thing. "How is it, a Jew asking for a drink from a woman of Samaria? The Jews

have no dealings with the Samaritans." And as the conversation proceeds she is full of banter and argument. You are pained to see that she does not appreciate her opportunity. There she was — in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ! She could look into his face; she could hear his voice; she could feel the power of his moral interest; she could enter into personal conference with that august soul. It was the chance of a lifetime; it was one of the greatest opportunities in twenty centuries of human experience. Yet she wastes her time and his in useless banter.

How dreadful to have an opportunity like that and not recognize the value of it! He spoke to her about "living" water and she thought he was talking about some well nearer to her wretched home so that she would not need to come all the way hither to draw. He uncovered the moral disgrace of her own life by that searching question about a "husband," and she thinks he is a kind of a fortune-teller, one who might tell her all the things she ever did. He spoke to her about worshiping God "in spirit and in truth," an inward and a genuine worship, and she burst out with her silly question as to whether men ought to worship in this mountain or at some other mountain or in Jerusalem. She constantly met his sympathetic interest in her life with a kind of rude joking. And Jesus, moved by the pathos of her indifference to the higher values at stake in that interview, said to her sadly, "If

thou knewest who it is that saith unto thee 'give me to drink' thou wouldst ask of Him and He would give thee living water." If thou knewest, thou wouldst ask; and he would give!

How many times this scene at Jacob's well is reënacted! You seek to bring some fellow-mortal into the presence of the mighty truths of religion and he has nothing to offer but banter and quibble. You mention the Bible and he perpetrates some feeble joke about Jonah and the whale. You mention the Church and his mind is off like a rat to bring out some story of an untrustworthy deacon. You strive to show him the well that is deep and he jumps up and down in the puddles of his own shallow conceit trying to splash your honest interest with mud. One would suppose that his inward thirst, his sense of unrest and destitution, his longing for something better than the impoverished quality of life he shows, would prompt him to seek that living water. It is not so. You have seen men on the road to Emmaus, and when a mysterious figure joined them, walked with them, talked with them, caused their hearts to burn within them by his finer interpretation of human experience, their eyes were holden. They did not know him. They allowed the opportunity to pass without having made itself known to them in the breaking of such bread as they had never eaten in all their lives.

What a picture of the whole sad tragedy

enacted every day in the year! Here are men and women who allow opportunities, sublime in their ultimate possibilities, to come within arm's length only to let them slip by without having yielded their help! There is a tide in the affairs of men. There is ebb and flow in the world of moral forces as well as in the mighty ocean.

> "There is a tide in the affairs of men,
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
> Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> Is bound in shallows, and in miseries.
> . . . We must take the current when it serves,
> Or lose our venture."

Here, in some moment of high spiritual privilege, comes the best moment thus far in all your life. If you know, you will ask; and he will give.

While the congregation was singing the hymn — just before the sermon — in my church in California, the ushers were accustomed to throw all the doors of the church wide open. The climate there is mild the year round and they wanted an influx of fresh air in the middle of the service. The church stood on a busy street, the doors opening out on the sidewalk. Next door there was a large theater which was open on Sunday night as on any other night. And through the wide doors at the end of the broad aisle I used to see passers-by stop and stand on the sidewalk, listening to the music. Sometimes there were a hundred of them before we finished the singing of the hymn.

One Sunday night George Adam Smith, of Aberdeen, was to preach for me. Just before his sermon the great congregation, led by organ and choir, was singing with a mighty swing,

> "In the cross of Christ I glory,
> Towering o'er the rocks of time,
> All the light of sacred story
> Gathers round its head sublime."

And scores of people were standing there on the outside listening to that act of worship. I felt like calling to them, "If you only knew! If you only knew that here in God's house one of the most gifted and devoted men in Scotland is ready to speak, you would come in and ask and he would give you a message from the Eternal." But the hymn ended and the doors were shut and they passed on into the theater. The tide for them was not taken at the flood.

Let me indicate first the importance of cultivating the power of insight as to the real meaning of each opportunity. He that hath eyes to see, let him see! It is foolish and wicked to stumble and blunder, imperiling your interests as some blind man might, when you have eyes. It is criminal to keep the ordinary eyes, or the eyes of the mind, or the eyes of the soul shut when they might be open.

Say to every opportunity which signals you what Jacob said that night to the angel, "Tell me thy name." Show me thy significance! All the Samaritan woman saw in that situa-

tion at Jacob's well was a chance to joke with a Jew over his being so thirsty on a hot day that he was compelled to ask for a drink from a woman of Samaria. For a time that was as far as she got into the meaning of that splendid opportunity.

On your way home from church you will see well-dressed, bright-faced young men hanging around the cigar stands or at the doors of cheap places of amusement. They are trying to "kill time," as they put it, though they have already slaughtered golden hours enough to fill a cemetery. You will see others spending the entire day set apart for thoughtfulness and aspiration in the thankless, fruitless task of staring at the cheap pictures and the poorly written stuff in the big Sunday edition. It is sold in bulk and accurately known as "reading matter."

Meanwhile they are allowing the great books by the master minds of the ages to go unread. They are entirely ignoring the services of worship and fellowship, which stand like open doors inviting them to spiritual advance. Within stone's throw there are opportunities which, enjoyed Sunday after Sunday, would register an impress upon the moral nature, causing it to rejoice in the image and likeness of God. You feel like saying to each one of those young men, "Is it possible that you cannot find anything better than these poor, weak, cheap diversions which eat up the hours, as Pharaoh's lean cows ate the fat ones, remaining as lean as

before?" In view of their loss you do say in your heart, "If you knew, you would ask."

When the woman came out with her water-pot that day she saw nothing but the water in the well. The water in the well has its uses. It can slake physical thirst. But there was One sitting by the well who could meet a deeper kind of need. When a man has done wrong and feels the burden of guilt upon his soul what can the water in the well do for him? When some soul has met with a bewildering sorrow the utter lack of sympathy in those great natural processes which enfold us becomes an added trial. Your own personal loss may seem to you to have put out all the stars in the sky and to have darkened the sun, but next morning the sun shines as brightly as if nothing had occurred. The birds sing in the trees as if there was no grief to be found in the universe. The flowers unfold their gentle beauty. The mighty tides ebb and flow as if everything were just the same when you feel as if the world had come to an end. It may be that your closest friends seem unable to enter sympathetically into your loss. Then it is that you crave sympathy, fellowship, a divine source of help which will make you brave and keep you strong. The water in the well, and all the other forms of physical satisfaction, fall flat. You turn to him who stood by the well waiting to minister to all the need the world might bring.

The turning-point in many a man's career

comes when his eyes are first opened to the full meaning of such an opportunity. There is a tide in the affairs of the soul which, taken at the flood, leads on to victory. In some high hour there came to you a heavenly vision. You had eyes to see what it meant. You were not disobedient to it. You tried from that hour to be true to your best moments, and not to your worst. As a result of that resolve you made a real advance into the land of spiritual achievement.

It may have come to you as unexpectedly as it came that day to the woman of Samaria. She was thirsty and she started with her pitcher for the well. She trudged along under the hot sun all unaware that yonder at the well the chance of a lifetime for her broken and defeated life was waiting. But there it was when she came up. And somewhere along the dusty road it stands awaiting every man. You may joke and banter as you make your approach. You may show yourself thoughtless and let it pass. But it is there — it is there for everyone who has eyes to see.

In the second place, the recognition of the deeper meaning of any opportunity should be followed by a resolute request. There is no encouragement given to the idea that the gifts of God are generously dropped down to us with no initial effort on our part. It you want to reap, you must sow. If you want gold, dig for it. If you mean to advance in any direction, take thought and strive with all your might.

It is the only way. Ask, if you desire to receive; seek, if you would find; knock, or no doors will open for you into the unseen. Work out your own salvation. God will not work within you to accomplish his good pleasure otherwise. Let your whole attitude as you move upon your way be one of moral request. Then and only then will the sublime reactions from the moral order which enfolds us come to you in the fullness of their power. That was what Jesus said to the woman — "If you know, ask."

The main indictment against the people of our day will not be that they were too dull and stupid to recognize the fact that there is something better than this weak, thin, flat life which so many of them live. They know that there is something vastly better. Some of them, in earlier days, have lived lives more worthy of their powers. There comes to them at times a feeling of inexpressible disgust for the method of existence into which they have fallen. They are wearing themselves out to gain things which they neither need nor deeply desire.

But for one reason or another they have allowed the inner life to slump. They have struck their flags, surrendering the Christian ideals and Christian habits which they formerly held. They know that their fundamental need is that "gift of God," the living water which would not leave whole sections of their natures still athirst. But they are listless; they lack

the spiritual energy to make the effort. They feel that the well is deep and that they have nothing adequate to draw with. Thus they slip along, allowing spiritual judgment to be taken against them by default. They know, but they fail to ask.

When Christ had risen from the dead he met his disciples in the upper room. He was ready to bestow upon them a more potent and vital equipment for their work. He had shown them his own matchless example until the impress of it would never fade out of their minds. He had uttered his marvelous teaching until they would never forget how he spoke. But now he desired to impart that without which his example and teaching would be unfruitful. He drew them close about him in the intimacy of personal friendship. He breathed upon them as if he would impart his own store of the life abundant. As he did this he said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

The word he used did not indicate a mere passive, receptive attitude. It was the word "*lambano,*" take. Take ye the Holy Spirit! By your own act of faith, by the clasp and retention of your own soul, by the resolute claim of your own insistent will, take ye the Holy Ghost! Then by that fresh enduement of power from on high, live the life! This is the way in which all the great gifts of God are to be received. They come in response to some act of initiative on our part. If you know, ask, take, retain.

The largest and most luxuriant plants in the garden drink the most water. They do it by the sheer vigor of their thrust. They send forth their many roots, taking up the moisture from the soil. They send out wide their many-mouthed leaves to catch the rain and the dew. They make the necessary demand for that which they must have to live that abundant and vigorous life.

The souls of men where the inner life is full and strong drink steadily and drink deep from the wells of living water. They hunger for righteousness; they thirst after the living God. They are only satisfied as they bring their wills into harmony with the enduring principles of righteousness, as they come themselves into personal fellowship with the infinite ground of all finite existence. They want to know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, that they may have life eternal.

The first time I visited Germany I spent a whole day on one of the Rhine steamers between Cologne and Mainz. Near me on the deck sat an American family — father, mother, grown-up son and daughter. We had scarcely passed Königswinter, about nine o'clock in the forenoon, when they began to grumble. They had asked the waiter to bring them some ice cream, for the day was warm. He informed them that there was no ice cream on the boat. They launched into a fierce denunciation of a country that did not furnish ice cream on its pleasure boats. They compared that steamer

with the day boats on the Hudson, greatly to the disadvantage of the famous Rhine. And they grumbled steadily for ten hours.

Meanwhile we were passing the Drachenfels and the Lorelei, Ehrenbreitstein and the mouth of the Moselle, with all those famous medieval castles and lovely vineyards which lend beauty to the noble river. But their eyes were holden and they had neither words nor interest for those scenes of natural and historic beauty. All they asked for was ice cream, and in that they were disappointed. If they had known the meaning and the associations of that great river they would have asked for something better. Have you never seen people making a much more important voyage but failing utterly to make of it any adequate request?

In the third place, when we ask aright he is ever ready to give. When the Samaritan woman first began to talk with Christ the only water she knew anything about lay at the bottom of Jacob's well. The higher forms of satisfaction which he suggested had not come within the range of her experience. But one of the charms of this narrative lies in tracing her growing capacity for something better. She ceased her banter when Jesus referred to the moral deficiencies of her own life — "He whom thou now hast is not thy husband." She murmured, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." When Jesus ignored the bigoted prejudice existing between Jews and Samaritans as to the place where men ought to worship, say-

ing, "True worshippers worship the Father in spirit and in truth," the woman replied, "I know that the Messiah is coming who will tell us all things." And presently, because of her interest in finer things, she forgot her thirst — "the woman left her water pot." She went back to the city, inviting all her friends to come out and see a man who had revealed her to herself. And she added, "Is not this the Christ?" In that growing interest and capacity for better things Jesus had indeed bestowed upon her the gift of God. If you know, you will ask; and he will give.

The gift of God! Here is one sitting at a public well who has it! He sits by all the familiar roads men travel, waiting to meet their need with that same gift. He stands ready to touch us at a deeper level of experience. We have all done wrong, as had this woman of Samaria. Her sins were the coarse sins of the flesh, into which she had been betrayed by an over-developed affectional nature indicated in the forming of that series of attachments. Our sins may be of the more subtle and dangerous type. We have all turned aside from the path of moral duty. We have all followed our personal inclinations in preference to the will of God and we have done it to our hurt. When we stand in the open before his searching eyes we are ashamed.

Then comes the desire for deliverance, for inward renewal, for peace. We have drunk at many wells and we have thirsted again. We

are seeking for some source of satisfaction which will be like a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. However it came about, we know as a matter of personal experience that when men and women turn from their sins, confessing them and asking forgiveness, when they put their trust openly in the mercy of God in Christ they find peace. The burden is gone. Relief comes. They walk in newness of life. You may test it for yourself as you demonstrate the fact that fire burns.

And however it came about, we know by personal experience that when men and women seek to have their moral natures steadied and strengthened through the study of the Bible and prayer, through the sense of fellowship with the Lord and with their fellow-believers, that great valid end is attained. Taste and see and you will know! Here is a well of water springing up perpetually for the satisfaction of every thirsty soul.

If I knew you as intimately as some people know you I should be able to see here and there barren tracts of human experience which are saying at this moment, "We thirst." Here is a man who has never succeeded in embodying those higher principles to which he subscribes in his daily vocation. He is making a living out of his calling but he is not making a life. Here is a woman whose home life is disappointing — it is a round of commonplaces which leave her soul athirst. Here is another life that has never entered into the power of

a noble friendship — the idle chit-chat of passing acquaintance is the best it has found, leaving the heart as dry as the state of Nevada.

For all these needs the water in Jacob's well, as a symbol of all forms of material satisfaction, does not suffice. You need the One who sat by the well waiting for the approach of just such need as yours. The deeper satisfactions come to us as powerful reactions from that spiritual order which enfolds us. They come to us as we know and ask and receive the gift of God.

"I heard the voice of Jesus say
'Behold, I freely give
The living water; thirsty one,
Stoop down and drink and live.'

"I came to Jesus and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in him."

VI

THE RIGHT FRONTAGE IN LIFE

"He kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed, his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem." — DANIEL VI, 10.

VI

THE RIGHT FRONTAGE IN LIFE

HERE was a young man away from home — he was in Babylon. It was not the sort of place he would have chosen for a residence, but he could not help himself. He was carried there a captive and was compelled to spend his life in that pagan city.

He saw the wealth and the power of it — its huge walls rose to the height of three hundred feet. He saw the social gaiety and dazzling luxury — the Hanging Gardens which the king had made in honor of his queen were one of the Seven Wonders of that ancient world. They rose in stately terraces, covered with trees and flowers; they were thronged with gaily dressed people in pursuit of pleasure. He saw what these prosperous people worshiped — they worshiped Power. The huge temple of Bel was grander in its proportions than the temple of Karnak on the banks of the Nile, grander than the mosque of St. Sophia on the banks of the Bosphorus, grander than the church of St. Peter's on the banks of the Tiber. It cast a long, ominous shadow far across the valley of the Euphrates when

the sun went down. In the full strength of its appeal from the material side Babylon represented the world in the fullness of its power.

But the young man was unmoved by all this. He had another city on the map of his world. The walls of that other city were neither great nor high. Its purse was never large nor well filled. It never became in any sense a city of pleasure. It concerned itself mainly with the fundamental verities of the spirit. And the name of this other city was Jerusalem.

It was the place where the divine honor dwelt. It stood for centuries as the center and source of the highest form of moral aspiration the world knew. Its very name awakens the deepest and sweetest religious memories we possess. Jerusalem, builded as a city that is compact together, whither the tribes go up! Jerusalem, city of our God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High! When this young man in Babylon went into his room and knelt in prayer — " his windows open toward Jerusalem " — he gave his life another sort of frontage than that furnished by the streets of Babylon. He faced his soul upon the highest — there before the eyes of his moral imagination was the city of God.

With that open window clearly in view let me speak to you about the importance of giving every life the right sort of frontage. The young man in Babylon gave his daily life a spiritual outlook. The window was only a place to look through — it was not a place of

exit, like a door. Daniel never moved away from the city of Babylon — he lived and died there. He did his work among those princes and presidents, those satraps and counselors of the pagan court. He showed himself faithful in the discharge of his duties to Darius, the king.

But though he could not escape from an environment distasteful, he could, by his habits of devotion, look three times a day upon a fairer prospect. He could face his inmost soul upon those massive fundamentals, the being of God, the high privilege of prayer, the moral imperative of duty, the mighty achievements of redemption. He formed the habit of standing up in the presence of some sublime truth which he could not see over nor under nor around. He threw up his window, and yonder across the wide stretch of territory which lay between was Jerusalem, the outward symbol of an infinite system of spiritual help.

His house was large and fine; it was gorgeously furnished. He stood next to the king, and the prime minister or secretary of state in such a capital as Babylon would be grandly housed. But in the midst of all this luxury he felt the longing of an exile. "We have here no continuing city," he seemed to say; "we seek one."

It was five hundred miles in an air line from Daniel's window to Jerusalem. But there are distances which are not measured in miles. When he looked through that open window in

the attitude of prayer, Jerusalem, with all it stood for, was within arm's length. He reached forth and was lifted by it to a higher level of thought and feeling. The One who is not far from any one of us brought that praying man into a sense of august fellowship with himself, into the joy of personal participation in the accomplishment of a regal purpose.

"Spiritual frontage," Francis G. Peabody called it in speaking to Harvard men. The inner life demands it for its own self-realization. If the soul looks out upon nothing better than the streets of Babylon, rich and gay though they may be; if the mind reads only the newspaper and hears only the talk which reflects the sentiments of Babylon; if the heart finds its chief pleasure in places of light amusement or in the more frivolous forms of social contact; if the inmost nature never rises above the smoke and soot of these commonplace pursuits, then inevitably the best that is in a man grows small, thin and anæmic. If he prizes moral vigor, stamina and endurance he must have the windows of his life open continually upon the superb sources of strength.

Open windows — they have become a hobby! And many people not content with that measure of fresh air which comes in through the open window provide their homes with sleeping porches. They spend every possible moment out-of-doors. Their lungs refuse the little section of air to be had indoors; they must draw upon the infinite sources of physical renewal

to be found in those wide spaces into which the trees and the grass have breathed the breath of life. They demand the air which shares in the freshness of the sea and the tonic of the hills.

You all need what the open window symbolizes for that life which endures for more than threescore years and ten. You need contact and conference with those mighty restorative agencies which belong to the city of God. If your inner life is to measure up to its best estate, you need the upper room opening out upon a horizon bounded by nothing nearer than the stars and the being of God. You cannot shut your soul behind brick walls or under steel roofs and live. Look toward the sky! Go forth and browse "in the infinite meadows of heaven where blossom the lovely stars." You have capacity for the highest — nothing less will satisfy.

There is a better city than this city with which you have your daily dealings. It is the city John saw descending out of heaven from God. He was a Jew and he called it the "New Jerusalem." It symbolizes that ideal social, industrial and political order coming down out of the realm of dreams to become actualized in the affairs of earth. It is a city that has foundations, its builder and maker is God. The Eternal is responsible for these great aspirations we cherish, touching a life into which the kings of the earth, the mightiest forces we know, shall bring their glory and honor. And

no matter how deeply and widely you strike the roots of your activity into the soil of immediate interests you need the daily frontage of your inner life upon that vaster prospect.

"The finest action springs ever from the largest consciousness of reality" says Dr. Jowett. If a man has no far-reaching spiritual vista but only the narrow outlook into the backyard of his own petty conceit, his conduct will be weak and mean. Vanity and self-consciousness grow rank in hotbeds where small interests and petty ambitions disintegrate. You can raise an insignificant plant in a flower-pot, but the oaks and the sequoias grow upon the bosom of mother earth, out under the open sky. They demand the wider consciousness of reality, the greater range of relationships.

The statelier qualities of mind and heart spring only from a consciousness of spiritual reality similarly expanded. Let your mind out! Let it wing its way toward that distant horizon as the eyes of Daniel reached across wide plains toward the Judean hills! Then you may bring your conduct up to "the style and manners of the sky."

In many a life it is the vision of distant realities which becomes its salvation. Here in the New Testament was another young man away from home. He too had gone into a far country. He had wasted his manhood in riotous living. He was undergoing the painful process

of disillusionment. When he had spent all there arose a mighty famine in the land. He began to be in want. No man gave unto him. He was hungry enough to eat husks with the hogs.

When he reached bed-rock in his downward course, he came to himself. "How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare! I will arise and go to my father." He saw by the eye of spiritual imagination that which set his feet in the pathway of a new life. His mind was open toward his father's house, and what he saw in that hard hour caused him to rise and go.

You cannot dispense with that proper frontage for your own life. If you were compelled to live in a cob-house or in a dog-kennel, all the more would your deeper nature demand a window opening upon that which has size and worth. And in every situation you can find for yourself an outlook upon something higher. Open your windows and gaze upon it until you are transformed by that renewing of your mind. Stand with unveiled face before the glory of the Lord as it manifests itself in the finest phases of human character you have ever beheld, until you are changed into the same image by the Spirit.

Here is a young man who has come up to the city of New York to study or to work out for himself a business career. He may feel that he is in Babylon. He sees the wealth and the power of this mighty city. He sees the social

gaiety and the alluring temptation. He is separated from those he loves and from the wholesome restraints of home. He has no one to ask him how he spends his evenings.

He is tempted to change the clean, honest habits of his youth and to lower those standards which he was taught to hold high. He is tempted to sacrifice principle to pleasure and to follow the line of least resistance because it will save him the effort involved in maintaining his spiritual ascent. You may spell his particular temptation in all sorts of ways, but it all comes to this — it is the everlasting temptation to let go the higher ideals of Jerusalem and to make himself comfortably at home in the lower wards of Babylon. In that hour he needs the steadying influence of the " spiritual frontage " suggested by the open window. He needs the moral oxygen of those Judean hills blowing in upon him like a tonic infusion of blood and iron.

In the second place, this young man in Babylon maintained a right frontage even though it involved risk. The king had published a foolish decree that if any one should ask a petition of any god or man save himself for thirty days he should be cast into a den of lions. But when Daniel knew that the writing was signed he knelt and prayed to God three times a day, as he did aforetime. He did it with his windows open, that he might look out upon the city of God. He did it with his windows open that the city of Babylon might look

in, if it chose. He was not hiding behind the door. He would not keep his religion out of sight. He knelt there, faced toward the Judean hills, proclaiming his unshaken devotion to the God of his fathers.

The men of Babylon spoke contemptuously of Jerusalem. "It is a wretched little hole," they said, "off in a rocky, barren district. It is peopled by religious cranks. When Nebuchadnezzar, of Babylon, attacked the place it could not defend itself — he sacked the city and robbed the temple. Jerusalem indeed!" It was an insignificant place in the eyes of Babylon.

But this young man kneeling at the open window was in no wise disturbed. He never allowed the sneers of the foolish to interfere with the quiet and usual transaction of his business. He went straight ahead making his steady ascent to levels of character they knew not of. The wealth and the high walls, the hanging gardens and the temple of Bel were as nothing compared to what he saw by the eye of faith when he looked out toward Jerusalem.

His course involved a risk more serious than that of ridicule. There was that decree about the den of lions. We need not stop to discuss the historicity of this narrative. We are told that "the Higher Criticism insists that there was no den and no lions and (worst of all), that there was no Daniel." This does not trouble me. It is my own opinion that the story

was written in the second century before Christ to nerve the discouraged Jews in hard straits under the heel of Antiochus Epiphanes. But I regard the real substance of that story as a message from the Eternal. I have seen the den and the lions and Daniel. I have seen them all in New York, and in San Francisco, and in cities on the other side of the globe.

This chapter in the Bible is reënacted every day in the year. You may have been told this very week that if you try to be honest in business you will starve; if you tell the truth you will go to the wall; if you maintain those fine scruples you will be a fool for your pains. "Here are the lions waiting to eat you! One of them is called 'Failure,' and another 'Poverty,' and another the 'World's Scorn.' The writing is signed — it is all there in black-and-white." In all of its details this ancient story is true to life.

When the decree had been issued it was a law of the Medes and Persians that it could not be altered. It was a way they had. For the king to change a decree would be to admit that he had made a mistake. And in those days, when an Oriental monarch was all but deified, that would never do. It was an iron-clad regulation which Daniel encountered when he kept on with his prayer.

But if the law of the Medes and Persians altered not, neither did Daniel. He too had a law established by the King of kings. His enemies found that he did not budge one inch

from the path of duty. His sense of what was right became a quarter-section of Gibraltar set down athwart their decree about the den of lions. He proposed to stand true to the highest he saw, come what might. And when that is done, in any quarter of the world, the ultimate supremacy of those spiritual forces mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds is manifested afresh.

Daniel was a Puritan. He lived a long way from Plymouth Rock; he had been dead for two thousand years when that compact was signed in the cabin of the Mayflower. He had never read a line of John Milton; he knew nothing about Oliver Cromwell. But he was a Puritan none the less. He insisted upon the rights of the individual conscience as against the dictates of arbitrary authority. Let King Darius publish his decree! Let the princes and presidents insist that the laws of the Medes and Persians alter not! Let them utter their threat about the den of lions! This ancient Puritan will stand for the right as God gives him to see the right, taking all the risks involved. He will stake his all upon fidelity to duty and trust to the march of events to justify the wisdom of his course. When you find that spirit in any land or age you find the Puritan.

His enemies had it in writing that if he offered his prayer he would be eaten by the lions. Poor, deluded, short-sighted mortals, that was all they knew! Daniel himself did not know what the outcome might be — he went

like Abraham of old, not knowing whither he went. It was another instance where moral faith transcended the considerations of expediency. The man who walks in the light true to the highest he sees, keeping his life faced toward the great right things of justice, mercy and truth, walks in safety. Yea, though he walks through the valley of the shadow of death, he fears no evil, for God is with him. Facing his life steadily upon righteousness he knows that nothing can permanently defeat him!

In the third place Daniel maintained his right frontage systematically. He went into the quiet of his own room. He opened his window toward the west. He had stated hours for spiritual exercise — he did it "three times a day." He did not pray in a hurried, scampering way, his mind distracted by a score of competing interests — "he knelt upon his knees," his very posture deepening his sense of the sacredness of what he was doing. He was as methodical as the Standard Oil Company. And other things being equal, the man of method is the man of achievement, in things spiritual as in things temporal. His systematic attention to those interests which are unseen and eternal enabled him to lay up treasure toward God.

The discipline of method has surpassing worth. The busiest men and women need that systematic attention to those interests which transcend all others. You have your hours for

meals. You would not trust your physical well-being for a week to a bite picked up here or there from any lunch counter you might pass. You have a time and a place when you put other things aside that you may sit down before him who satisfies our mouths with good things, and be fed. It is only by systematic attention to your needs that you are able to maintain a robust and serviceable physique.

If you desire moral stamina and spiritual energy, meet the conditions with equal fidelity. Early in the morning, before you come down into the streets of Babylon to hear its talk and breathe its impoverished atmosphere, open your windows. Look out upon the sources of strength. Wait upon him until your soul mounts up with wings like an eagle. Wait upon him until your moral nature can run upon errands of usefulness and not grow weary. Wait upon him until you can walk — and this is the climax of the ancient promise — wait until you can walk at your ordinary gait in the customary discharge of duty and not faint. Put your heart through its facings. Let it gain a fresh sense of the majesty and glory of God, a fresh sense of the moral interest he cherishes toward you — then you will not be afraid of Babylon with all its lions.

When the day is over and Babylon has had its way with you for another eight hours, go up and look out through that open window upon those structures devoted to traffic of another kind. Let your eye rest upon that broad street

which has in the midst of it the river of the water of life, clear as crystal. Let that whole city whose builder and maker is God, sweep in upon your vision. You sleep better when your windows are open spiritually as well as physically. The oxygen from those mountains round about Jerusalem is good for soul and body. Lift up your eyes unto the hills from whence cometh help. Then you will be able to say, "I will lay me down in peace and sleep, for Thou makest me to dwell in safety."

Jerusalem, as I have used the term, is not a place on the map. It is not the name of a city forty miles east of Joppa. It stands as a symbol for that source of help which is not forty miles, nor one mile, from any spot where men and women are tempted and tried, where they struggle and fail. It is not far from any one of us — open the window of your soul and it will impinge upon you like the breath of the morning.

Your feet may be treading the streets of Babylon; your hands may be busy with the tedious tasks of Babylon; your mind may be held by all the wearisome details which make up the ordinary grind. So be it! All the while your inmost nature may be open, inviting, receptive toward that nobler order of life which seeks and finds its fullest expression in the lives of busy people. The busiest are often the best people, because in all the multiplicity of their interests they keep clear their vision of that higher world which perpetually yields

to them its strength. Keep your frontage right; let it be unobstructed by dishonest purpose and every modest scene of duty will become ennobled.

How many of you know all this by personal experience! You may never have been within a thousand miles of that great city in the valley of the Euphrates. You may never have seen the walls and battlements of Jerusalem. But you are familiar with every valley and hill in that whole region. You know Babylon and Jerusalem as you know the Battery and Central Park. Your knowledge of spiritual geography was not gained by travel, it was gained by experience of the deep things of God.

Many a man of quiet demeanor has been able for years to bid defiance to the forces of evil because his windows were open toward the source of power. Many a woman, frail in body and modest as a nun, has stood valiantly in the place of duty because from the upper room she saw him who is the strength of any life.

It was so in the life of the Son of man. "Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Wherefore, seeing we are encompassed about with a multitude of temptations, let us run with patience the race set before us, looking unto him — looking unto him!

VII

THE MAN WITHIN THE MAN

"This day salvation is come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham." — LUKE XIX, 9.

VII

THE MAN WITHIN THE MAN

"THE Son of man came eating and drinking." His whole habit of life was intensely social. He was a diner-out. He was found so often at men's tables, enjoying their hospitality, that his enemies accused him of being "a gluttonous man and a winebibber." The charge was false, but the fact that it could be made with any show of reason indicates how far he was from the lonely, ascetic type.

We are told that he began his public ministry at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. He entered fully into the joy of the occasion, and when the refreshments gave out he came to the relief of his host, helping him to renew the supply. When the hungry multitude followed him into a desert place to hear his words he felt called upon to act the part of a host. He bade the men sit down on the green grass and he provided them with bread. He was constantly illustrating spiritual truth from the familiar experiences of social life — his parables of the great supper and of the ten virgins at the wedding and his address on "the bread

of life " are characteristic. He made the act of eating and drinking a perpetual sacrament. The most prominent article of furniture in any Christian church is a table. It is the Lord's table, where Christian disciples gather in sacred, joyous fellowship. Jesus was intensely social in his whole habit of life.

Here in Jericho he invited himself to dine with a rich man. He invited himself because the rich man would never have thought of inviting this distinguished teacher of religion to his home. Zacchæus had a good home and plenty to eat, for he was rich. He would have been glad to exercise the grace of hospitality, but no respectable man in Jerusalem would have accepted an invitation to the home of Zacchæus. He was a " publican," that is to say, a tax collector for the hated Roman government. The tax collector in any country is not likely to be as popular as Santa Claus. But the tax collector in Palestine, by reason of the nefarious system in vogue, stood socially where a gambler or a rumseller stands with us. He was ostracized. He could not even go to church without hearing some Pharisee say in his prayer, " Thank God I am not an extortioner, unjust, an adulterer, or even as this tax collector."

It meant everything, therefore, when this master of men looked up into the sycamore tree and said, " Zacchæus " — that was the tax collector's name but the people of Jericho never addressed him thus. They called him

"wolf," "dog," "bear." These were the affectionate terms of endearment which orthodox Jews employed in addressing publicans. "Zacchæus"—when Jesus uttered his name in tones of respect it put the man at once in a better frame of mind. It was like a drink of cold water on a hot day. "Make haste and come down, for today I must abide at thy house." Zacchæus made haste and came down and received him joyfully. The moral results of that hour at the dinner table are here set down in the passage where the text stands.

We notice first that Jesus saw another and a better man within the figure of this hated tax collector. Zacchæus, a publican, a sinner, a man hated by his fellow-townsmen, but Zacchæus also potentially a son of Abraham, a child of God, a man destined to share in that spiritual enterprise in which all the nations of the earth are being blessed! Hidden away in the depths of his soul there was a certain something waiting for the call of Christ. He had been taking men's property by wrong accusation. He had been hoarding his wealth as a miser, but he had within him the capacity for a right life. And on that day when the Son of man came to his house the voice of God spoke to the man within the man.

There are three ways of looking at a sinful man. First, there is the hard, that is to say, the wooden, way. The people who view the matter in this light see nothing but the law

of righteousness and the act of disobedience. They make no allowance for human weakness, for long continued temptation, for mitigating circumstances. They are people who have never sinned themselves, as they think, never wavered, never doubted, never loved, never lived. Their eyes are holden and narrow. They see nothing but the line of rectitude and the step aside. They offer no hope nor help to men who have done wrong.

There is the lax way of viewing a sinful man. These people show an indiscriminate leniency. "It all comes in the day's work," they say, "the good and the bad." And it is all pretty much alike — evil is only good in the making, it is one of the growing pains of virtue. "The man reeling down the street drunk is, after all, engaged in a mistaken quest for God," as a certain noted preacher of an extremely liberal type had it a few years since. And these soft-hearted people go along mixing their colors until they have no black and white left — only a few indistinct shades of gray. There is neither help nor hope for men who have done wrong with them for all their soft mush of concession.

There is a third way, the way of those people who are both clear-eyed and warm-hearted. They never forget the difference between right and wrong — they know that it is like the difference between heaven and hell. The difference between a good man and a bad man is like the difference between a sheep and a goat — the

bad man, for the time being, is a different sort of animal altogether. The men in this third class would not think of calling a thieving, miserly tax collector like Zacchæus "a saint" or "a man engaged in a mistaken quest for God." They would not suggest that there is not much to choose after all between some warm-hearted woman of the streets and Mary the mother of our Lord. They keep their colors distinct. Black is black and white is white; they do not allow their moral distinctions to run together in a common blur. But they have also a kind of second sight, a clairvoyance for detecting the hidden capacity for something better in every man who has done wrong. And when they see that capacity they speak to it. They call it by name, as Christ did with Zacchæus that day in Jericho. And that sympathetic insight into moral failure gives them power.

When I was in Alaska I saw the work of a man named William Duncan. He went to a little village called Metlacatla forty-odd years ago. He found the Indians low, dirty, ignorant and vile. They were so immoral in some of their habits as to be indescribable. But Duncan saw beneath the surface. He said, "God made these Indians and he made them in his own image." God carved his image there in bronze, as he carved it in ivory in the white man and in ebony in the black man.

William Duncan began to preach to those Indians. He taught them, and lived among them as a man of God. The word of grace

and truth was made flesh and dwelt among them in the person of William Duncan. He kept it up for years until the image of God in bronze began to show. Go to that Indian village now and you will find every family living in its own house, with all the decent appointments of home life. You will find a bank, a coöperative store, a saw mill, a box factory, a salmon cannery, owned and operated by those Indians engaged in profitable industry. You will find a school where Indian boys and girls are taught to read and write, to think and live. You will find a church where an Indian clergyman is preaching the gospel of eternal life, and an Indian musician, once a medicine man beating his tom-tom, is now playing a pipe organ while a congregation of Indians sing the great hymns of the church to the praise of Almighty God.

William Duncan was right — God made them. He made them in his own image. And Duncan learned to call every Indian by name, by that new name which embodied those higher qualities for which he had capacity. In every case he saw the man within the man.

It meant everything to Zacchæus to feel that day that there was one man in Jericho who recognized that better something in his own nature and stood ready to call it by name. Call any man wolf or dog and he may come to act like a cur or a coyote. Reputation is not character — it is only what people call a man; it is only the shadow which character casts, but it can be a pleasant, healing

shadow for all that. It was the master of English expression who said:

> "Who steals my purse, steals trash; 't is something, nothing;
> 'T was mine, 't is his, and has been slave to thousands;
> But he, that filches from me my good name,
> Robs me of that which not enriches him,
> And makes me poor indeed."

When Christ spoke to Zacchæus, calling him by name, indicating his respect for the capacity of Zacchæus to become a son of Abraham, a child of God, it awakened a new aspiration in the depths of that unhappy soul.

In the second place, by his personal fellowship Jesus helped that other and better man into being. It cost Christ something that day to enroll himself as a friend of Zacchæus. When they walked down street together the people murmured — "He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." They thought that there must be a screw loose somewhere — a man is known by the company he keeps. They felt that if he were a prophet he would not have come to Jericho, passing by the leading members of the church in order to be the guest of a tax collector.

The Master understood all this and accepted it. He was willing to pay the full price of doing good in his own way. There was never an hour when he was not ready to be wounded for the transgressions of others, to be bruised for their iniquities, and to accept stripes of all sorts that they might be healed. His readiness

to incur the suspicion and hatred of Jericho by putting himself in open personal alliance with that better nature which he saw in the publican was one of the elements of his power.

Jean Valjean came out of the galleys a discharged convict. Every man he met scorned him because he had been in prison. The men swore at him; the women shuddered when they saw him pass; the dogs snarled.

He wanted to stay at an inn, but the landlord refused his money because he had been a convict. He went to the stable, but the hostlers refused to allow him to sleep in the hay. He tried to creep into a dog-kennel, for it was beginning to rain, but the dogs bit him and drove him into the street. "I have knocked at every door," he said to a passer-by, "and every door has been shut in my face with a slam." "Have you knocked there?" said the man, pointing to the house where the good Bishop Welcome lived. "No." "Knock there." When the convict knocked, there was the sound of a hearty "Come in." And when the bishop saw that it was the convict his sister had been describing as having been seen on the street, he called the man "Monsieur," and invited him to sup with them and to spend the night. He had as his guest a man who was a sinner.

And in the middle of the night Jean Valjean arose and stole the bishop's candlesticks and made off with them — as might have been expected! Exactly! But that kindness of the

bishop to the outcast, that faith in the capacity of the man to be something better than a convict, that readiness to give him sympathy and personal fellowship in his moral struggle, sowed a tiny bit of influence which was like a grain of mustard seed. When it was grown it became a mighty tree of changed character bearing its good fruit every month in the year.

Every minister listens sympathetically to a great many stories which he thinks are lies when he hears them — and it often turns out that they are lies. Every minister helps many a man who shows himself unworthy. Every man whose heart is not made of reënforced concrete trusts to the better impulses of many a man only to be disappointed in the outcome.

And all this is to be accepted as part of the day's work. God pity us if we should become so sagacious and prudent as never to venture anything on the prospect, uncertain though it may be, of that man within the man! God pity the world if Christ had been thus careful of the investment of his trust. If you want to help that man who ought to be, into being, believe in him! Believe in Zacchæus! Believe in the capacity of the man who has fallen into the mud! Believe in the woman whom the Pharisees are ready to stone! Believe in that hidden capacity for a nobler life and your own faith will become a mighty agent in God's hand for the bringing out of that better self.

Suppose the man you would help toward

Christian life is like Zacchæus — hard, tight, mean, with scarcely a generous impulse left in his grasping soul. I have never observed that much is accomplished by beating such men over the head with hard words, even though they deserve them all. I have never seen that much headway is made by stoning the wrongdoer. When the first rock hits him it is not apt to induce the mood of aspiration. I have seen wonders accomplished in the work of moral recovery where some great-souled man, in sympathetic recognition of the nature which has gone down in defeat, puts himself in open fellowship with the man within the man. You are warranted in telling Zacchæus that he is capable of being something better than a thieving, miserly tax collector. Indicate to him that he is a son of Abraham; a child of God with a place and a part in that great spiritual enterprise in which the world is to be blessed. When that approach is made, we may look for results.

Finally, Jesus indicated the proper field where Zacchæus could give expression to that better self. It cost Christ something to walk down street as the guest of a bad man. It cost Zacchæus something also to receive Christ into his house and into his heart. It made necessary a radical readjustment. We find in the action of this man a full page life-size picture of old-fashioned, thoroughgoing repentance. Where repentance is genuine, it costs. Tears are cheap — there are those who

shed bucketsful of them and they have no more worth or significance than so much rain water. Remorse is cheap — it may be merely the pain of being found out, not involving any serious change of purpose. Repentance, where it is real, is more precious than diamonds and rubies. It foretells the upward movement of a soul which will outlast and outshine them all. Repentance means an about face, the putting away of dishonest purpose, the actual movement of the life toward that light where there is no darkness at all.

It cost Zacchæus something to repent. His two most serious faults had been these — he had been dishonest; he had been stingy. Now at the very point where he had fallen down, he begins to get up. As a result of his conference with Christ, the first two words which open his lips are these, "Restore, Give." "If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation I *restore* him four fold." Four for one indicated a very thoroughgoing type of repentance. "The half of my goods I *give* to the poor." Give — it was a new word for Zacchæus! It almost stuck in his throat like Macbeth's "Amen." Buy, sell, get, gain, hold, enjoy — these words he could pronounce! He knew the experiences they represented. But "give" had been a word he could not pronounce. Now, in the hour when salvation came to his house, he begins to utter it. He had been dishonest, and he had been stingy. Now that he has received Christ into his heart,

he will restore and give. It was salvation, the real article, which had come to his house.

This new life in Zacchæus, this man within the man, seems to have been born about noon while Christ was his guest at dinner. But it grew rapidly. It went along adding cubits to its stature. Before the sun went down that night it had the strength of a giant. It was standing on its own two feet, speaking plainly and doing the deeds of a full-grown Christian. When newness of life rises rapidly into such vigor as to restore fourfold for every dollar taken wrongfully and bestow the half of all it has in charity, you know that it is a plant of the Lord's own planting. Verily salvation had come to that house!

Jesus entered and passed through Jericho, and as a result of his visit salvation came to one man who lived from that hour as a son of Abraham. The same august and benign figure enters and passes through every city. I saw him here on the streets of this city yesterday. I have seen him to-day. He goes about looking into the face of every man, rich or poor. He calls every man by name, by that new name which indicates what the man may become. And every man who hears that voice and allows his better nature to open the door will find that salvation comes to his heart. He will begin in that hour to live as a child of God.

VIII

THE HIGHEST FORM OF SACRIFICE

"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac." — HEBREWS XI, 17.

VIII

THE HIGHEST FORM OF SACRIFICE

YOU must read the story which lies back of those words with the eyes of your heart. The eyes of your mind will never reach the deeper meaning of it. If any one should undertake to recite this passage in cold blood as he might read a page of trigonometry he would mispronounce half the words. The hard and fast way of dealing with it has made it a libel on the character of God and a nightmare to the hearts of loving parents. It can only be interpreted in the light of the affections. It must be carried beyond the realm of ordinary intellectual perception into the sphere of sacred feeling to be understood.

Here was a man with an only son! He had other children as a result of the irregular unions prevalent in that rude world, but only one son of his love. His hopes for the future were bound up with the life of that boy. His prospects for happiness as the shadows should lengthen rested upon this child of his heart. He all but idolized him.

But he was a thoughtful, conscientious father — he was accustomed to examine himself re-

garding that sweet affection. He saw around him other fathers who, in their ill-advised zeal, were taking their sons and offering them in sacrifice to the terrible deities they worshiped. Gradually this question forced itself home in Abraham's mind, "Is Isaac mine or God's? Is my love for my child greater or less than my devotion to God?"

Every time he saw the hand of a father reddened with the blood of his child, every time he watched the smoke rise from some rude altar where a human body was consumed, the question came, "Do I love my God in that supreme way, or do I love Isaac more?"

You know what followed. It is told here with simple directness. There came to him one of those commanding moral impulses which the Hebrew called "the word of the Lord." It said, "Take now thine only son Isaac into the land of Moriah and offer him for a burnt offering."

Terrible as it was, Abraham set out to obey. He rose up early in the morning to nerve himself for the hard day ahead. He clave the wood and saddled the ass not sparing himself any detail of the painful preparation for that fateful hour. He took Isaac his son and went to the place of which God had told him.

When they reached the spot the boy looked around with an innocent wonder and said, "My father, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb?" He thought his father had forgotten something. "Where is the lamb for a

burnt offering?" The father replied (and you can hear his voice break, for the ground was reeling under his feet), "My son, God will provide himself a lamb."

The altar was built and the fire laid. Then this man of heroic build and sturdy faith reached for his knife to slay his son. Just there an angel of the Lord stayed his hand. A voice from heaven spoke to him of a higher use to be made of that child's life. Abraham was led to offer a ram which he found caught in the bushes nearby and to take his son back to his home, now to be trained for a career of usefulness, with a deeper sense of the sacred significance of his life.

"Is this boy mine or God's?" the father had been asking during all those months of struggle. His heart said "Mine." His creed said "God's." Both answers were true and untrue. Each answer was true in what it affirmed and false in what it denied. The boy was Abraham's child, his own flesh and blood, but held in trust — ultimately the boy belonged to the author and giver of life. The boy was God's child, but he could only fulfill his sonship in the divine family by becoming a good son in his earthly home, through the nurture and affection of his father's house. And in that hour of heart-searching Abraham entered into a deeper understanding of human affection. He realized the fuller spiritual significance of this earthly relationship as he offered it in whole-hearted surrender and consecration to God.

"By faith Abraham offered up Isaac," the text says. The writer of this eleventh chapter of Hebrews viewed the transaction as complete. He says nothing about the staying of Abraham's hand or the arresting of his action by a voice from heaven. "By faith Abraham offered up Isaac." And he is right. In the agony of that hour and in the clearer vision to which it led the father did make his offering complete. He saw and he accepted God's rights in that child.

He was mercifully restrained, by some higher impulse, by some sober second thought which came to him at that crucial moment as a word of the Lord, from actually slaying his son in a mistaken spirit of worship. But in the depths of his own soul the offering was carried through to its completion. He went down the mountainside saying to himself, "This child of my love is also the child of God's love. This good gift of the Eternal, on which my hopes of happiness rest, must now be consecrated to the highest ends."

Here, then, we have what I have ventured to call "the highest form of sacrifice." At its best sacrifice is not an act of destruction but an act of consecration. If thy right hand cause thee to offend, cut it off; cast it from thee. It is better to enter into life maimed than having two hands to steal with them, to forge with them, or to do any wrong. If thy right foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off. It is better to be without feet and sit down for the

rest of one's days than having two feet to walk with springing step in paths of evil. If thy right eye cause thee to offend, pluck it out. It is better to enter into life without eyes and grope with the blind, than having two eyes to use them for wrong ends.

Better every time! As between the degradation of any faculty and mutilation, by the destruction of it, the choice is made instantly. Better a life maimed but honest and clean than a life possessed of every faculty yet given over to evil.

But this does not exhaust the possible options. "Better" indeed, but beyond that better stands a further option which is "best." Degradation is the worst use to be made of any faculty — mutilation would be much better. But best of all is the consecration of faculty — the right hand, the right foot, the right eye — to worthy use. In that case the man enters into life not maimed, but whole and sound.

This was the lesson Abraham learned at Moriah. Degradation of the son's life, through the favoritism and petting of an indulgent father, until the boy's moral fiber might have been destroyed, would have been a tragedy indeed. Better the mutilation of the father's affection, better the cutting off of the boy's life than the moral degradation of it. But best of all would be the discovery of the deeper meaning of human affection through the consecration of that lovely relationship to the holiest ends.

Let me apply that general principle in a practical way to several interests. Here is a man with a sound physique. He is every inch a man. He rejoices daily in his splendid bodily vigor. He gives abundant attention to diet and exercise, to outdoor air and to those recreations which minister to health. But he is a conscientious man, and in some quiet hour he is led to ask himself, "Is this abounding physical vigor mine or God's? Is it mine to keep and enjoy, or is it a thing to be sacrificed to him?"

What answer shall we give? The worldling says, "It is all mine. These appetites are mine to enjoy." He allows himself every conceivable pleasure consistent with a prudent regard for his own continued comfort. He uses his Sundays entirely for recreation. He holds himself sternly aloof from every exacting form of service which might bring weariness or pain. He insists that his bodily life is all his own.

Over against him stands the ascetic. He says, "This body is not mine — it must be offered to God." He flogs his body to keep it under. He starves those appetites. He wears his hair shirt to his own discomfort. He allows the fire and fervor of his moral earnestness to burn out his physical efficiency.

Which man is right? Neither one is right. "Know ye not that your body" — yours to possess, yours to enjoy, yours to maintain at the highest possible point of efficiency — "know ye not that your body is the temple

of the Holy Ghost? " It is a field for the manifestation of the divine. Some measure of the divine glory is to shine in your face, lighted up by moral purity and intelligent kindliness. Some measure of the divine energy is to reach forth in your hand as you stretch it out to do good. Some measure of the divine purpose is to walk with willing feet in those paths of useful service you have chosen. Your body is a temple of God. Therefore glorify God in that body which is both yours and his. Neither the degradation of the body by careless self-indulgence nor the mutilation of it by a false asceticism, but the consecration of its every function to worthy use, presents the commanding Christian ideal.

Here is a man of mental force. He is possessed by a consuming ambition to know. In his price-list knowledge and culture are more precious than rubies — they are not to be valued with much fine gold. He is intent upon intellectual mastery. He strives to think, to speak and to write in such a way as to command interest, win admiration, influence the action of his fellowmen. He says with a loud voice to all he meets, " Guard thy brain with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

Now to every such man there comes this word of the Lord. " Take now thy brain power which thou lovest and get thee into the land of Moriah." He must not hold his intelligence for private enjoyment. He must not think of

it simply as a personal asset which can be turned into cash or culture or fame. He must stand on Mount Moriah with Abraham and make an offering of his mental efficiency.

He will not be asked to slay a single faculty which God has given him. He need not harm a hair on the head of any child of his intelligence. He must see however that knowledge and training are not for pride of achievement but for investment in useful service. Efficiency is not given that he may outrun all his competitors in the race of life but to enable him to have a larger part in bringing up the rear guard. And his discovery of the real meaning of the superior gift will enable him to go down the side of the mountain holding his ability as a more sacred possession because he has now received it back from the altar of consecration. He has recognized the rights of God in his own powers.

When Booker Washington addresses the students at Tuskegee he tells them that the word of the Lord has come to him with this message, "Take now thy gifts and get thee into the land of Moriah." He tells those dusky-faced students that they have not come to Tuskegee to be trained so that they may more successfully compete with their fellows, feathering their own nests quickly, making them soft and warm. He tells them that they have not come to be trained that they may go back and establish better homes and higher types of family life and then look down with

careless contempt upon the untrained negroes. "You have come here to be trained that you may become more heavily and capably responsible for the welfare of your race in the several communities where you are to live."

This is what they do in the green tree of a black man's school. What a stinging rebuke to all that selfishness of culture which we find here and there in our own more fortunate race! It shows that Booker Washington himself has been to Moriah and has there learned the deeper meaning of those higher privileges which men hold dear.

Here is a man with a sense of moral superiority. He is free from those vices which enslave weaker men. He has kept himself clean from many of the current evils. What shall he do with that sense of moral advantage? It is as dear to him as the child of his love.

He may simply keep it and be proud of it. He may indeed take it into the temple and stand there beside the Pharisee, saying, "Thank God I am not as other men are, thieves and liars, drunkards and gamblers. I attend church twice in the week. I give bank notes to all kinds of good causes." He may do just that if he chooses — no one can say him nay. His good name and his freedom from certain moral blemishes are as truly his own as was Isaac the child of Abraham.

But what a narrow use to make of moral integrity! The Lord says to every such man,

"Get thee out of this mood into a mood that I will show thee." The upright man's integrity is not to be held apart that it may minister to his moral pride. He has his share of those qualities in which the nations of the earth are blest, but this high end is not secured so long as he maintains that selfish, separatist mood. He must take his moral worth up to Mount Moriah for investment in a broader service. He must take upon his heart a deeper sense of responsibility for the moral shame and defeat of those other lives. He must enter into a profounder sympathy with those who strive and fail — and with those who lack the necessary impulse to resolutely strive. His own virtues must be touched to finer issues by an unselfish participation in the everlasting struggle between the higher and lower. Let him enter heartily into that fight which is ever on and he will receive his moral nature back with a new sense of its value. It will seem as if a voice from heaven had spoken to him, showing him the more excellent way. It will seem to him as if an angel's hand had touched his heart, arresting him in his mistaken course. Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and though I give my body to be burned and have not love for my brother man I am nothing.

No man is a good man until he faces the fact that but for certain advantages of birth and training, certain restraining influences and graces, he, too, might have been marked by the grosser forms of wrongdoing. No man is

a good man until, in humble gratitude to God and in ready sympathy for his less fortunate fellows, he stands ready to utilize his own spiritual attainments in aiding those moral failures at the foot of the class. When we witness the lack of this quality in some respectable lives we feel like saying, "Behold the wood, but where is the fire and the lamb? Where is the warmth of sympathy and the spirit of unselfish devotion?" When God introduces this finer element into any such life he provides for himself a lamb.

Once more, here is a life profoundly possessed by a beautiful affection for some other life. The very sweetness of human existence springs from that relationship. The eye kindles, the cheek flushes with pleasure, and the heart leaps with joy when that life appears. How many of you know all this, as we say, "by heart"! It is the joy of your life that you love and are beloved. "Out of the affections," you say, "come all the mightier issues of life."

How easy it is to find satisfaction in some such relationship, chiefly for the delight it brings! And how unworthy it becomes when it is thus held apart from the vaster interests of human existence. We can understand the stiff protest in the Middle Ages which carried thousands of their choicest men and women off into monasteries and cloisters. The ascetic protest, by its very extravagance, testified to the presence of a great evil. The sweet inti-

macies between the sexes were being held apart for personal gratification only, and the holy enthusiasm of that day arrayed itself against that practice. It took those gracious affections up into Mount Moriah and sacrificed them as a burnt offering unto the Lord.

The method was mistaken but the purpose was sound. It is only when love is lifted into the light and warmth of an honest effort to have the larger fellowship realized that it attains to its highest estate. The love must be sanctified through its consecration to that wider undertaking. The man or the woman who enjoys to the full the sweetness of personal affection should find in his own happiness an added reason for devoting his life to the promotion of the social well-being of his fellows. He must take his love to Mount Moriah and learn there the deeper implications of it as it comes to furnish him with impulse for ministering to the heart-hunger of those other lives who suffer from loneliness. In that open vision it will be seen that the dearest affections are not to be held apart as exclusively private possessions — they must become "social energies" for the hastening of the brotherhood of man.

This, then, I take it, is the real meaning of the text. "By faith Abraham offered up Isaac." Not a drop of the child's blood was spilled, yet he was offered. The hand of the father was not stained by an act of murder, yet his offering was complete. It was not an

offering of destruction, but an offering of consecration, devoting the child's life to higher ends. The boy was to find nobler uses for his existence than ministering to the pride and joy of an Oriental sheik. He must find his own place in that vaster spiritual movement which should be genuinely Messianic. Nothing was destroyed, yet everything was truly offered.

Read the whole narrative in the light of these spiritual transactions! In that great hour the highest prevailed. The voice from heaven spoke to the affectionate nature of the father. He rose above the current practice of his time, where human sacrifice was common. He rose superior to the narrow selfishness of his own intimate affection. He gratefully accepted the rights of God in the child of his love, and he walked down the mountainside resolved to consecrate that unfolding life anew to the service of the greatest ideals he cherished.

Bring up your own choicest and dearest gifts to Mount Moriah. Bring your sound health — it is not yours for careless, pleasurable indulgence, nor is it to be neglected or scornfully flung away by any mistaken asceticism. I beseech you by the mercy of God that ye present your bodies a living, not a half-dead, sacrifice unto God, holy and acceptable, for this is your reasonable service. Invest that splendid vigor in the service of less fortunate lives.

Bring up your mental powers — they are not to minister to your own pride of achievement,

nor are they to be destroyed by ill-advised mortification. It is the glory of any life to rise to its full stature that it may have the more to lay upon the altar of service. Let your own intellectual efficiency minister to those untrained, unprivileged lives.

Bring your moral superiority, not that you may lord it over the spiritual failures around you, not that you may fling it away in Bohemian carelessness, but that you may invest it in the service of those who suffer moral defeat.

Bring that sweet and sacred affection of your life and let it become to you an unfailing source of motive and stimulus for the brightening of those hungry and lonely lives which await your help. By this action you will find that high quality of being which you are in danger of losing — you will find your life by losing it in the service of the living God.

IX

BROKEN PLANS

"They assayed to go into Bithynia but the Spirit suffered them not. And passing by Mysia they came to Troas." — Acts xvi, 7, 8.

IX

BROKEN PLANS

THIS does not sound like a promising text — it sounds more like a lesson in geography. But there is a world of meaning wrapped up in those unfamiliar names. Set them in order! Dress them up in their proper associations. Give them a chance to talk and they will tell you a story.

Bithynia, Mysia, Troas! They are not mere names. They are not just places on the map of that ancient and half-forgotten world. They are experiences. They are phases of feeling, personal, vital, significant. They are moods through which some of you have been passing during the last twelve months.

Here is the story, briefly sketched. Saul of Tarsus, or Paul, as he came to be called, was an Asiatic. He was born and reared on that continent which has shown itself preëminently the home of religious faith, of moral vision, of spiritual insight. All the great religions of the world are Asiatic in their origin — Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Mohammedanism, Judaism, Christianity. They were all born in Asia, where this man Paul was born.

And he had been working successfully as an apostle of the new faith in Asia. He had been preaching in the cities of Jerusalem, Damascus and Antioch. He had planted church after church upon that continent which had been so fruitful in religious influence. He had aided in the development of flourishing Christian communities in many parts of Syria and Asia Minor.

He was now purposing to go north into the beautiful province of Bithynia. It lies on the shores of the Black Sea. It is just across the Bosphorus from the site of the modern city of Constantinople. But when Paul and his friends moved out in that direction something happened. We are not told exactly what — he does not go into details. But he believed, in the light of what occurred later, that it was providential. "The Spirit," he says, "suffered us not to go into Bithynia." They found obstacles in the way which were insurmountable. They were compelled to give up their plan altogether. "And passing by Mysia, they came to Troas." There at Troas, on the shore of the Ægean Sea, a place forever memorable in the life of this forceful man, came the vision of the man of Macedonia which carried him across the Ægean into Europe. It opened up the most important work of his life, the planting of Christianity on the continent of Europe.

He gave up his plan to enter a province, and God gave him a continent. Europe was

even then taking the right of the line. Rome ruled the world, and Rome was in Europe. The two leading literatures of that day were the Greek and the Latin, and they were both European. The wealth of the world was rapidly flowing to those cities on the other side of the Mediterranean because the European countries were taking the lead in commerce and trade.

Here to the west was that continent which for two thousand years should exercise a dominant influence upon the life of the whole race, such as Asia in all that period never approached. It was worth while to upset this man's plans to enter Bithynia. It was worth while to cut across the grain of his own wish and expectation in order to set the feet of a mighty apostle upon the continent of Europe. His lips were opened upon the ears of Europe as he proclaimed the gospel of the Son of God. He assayed to go into lovely Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered him not, and passing by Mysia he came to Troas and on to Europe.

He scarcely knew what he was saying when he ascribed this change of plan to the action of the divine spirit. His action, however, has received abundant justification at the hands of recorded history. Under the moral power of that gospel which he carried that day across the Ægean, Europe has gained a clear ascendancy over all the other continents of the world in the development and in the expression of Christian impulse. The sublimest manifesta-

tions of Christian sentiment we know in Christian art and in Christian architecture, in Christian music and in Christian literature, have come, not from Asia, where Christianity was born, but from Europe, where Paul and his fellow-missionaries carried their gospel that day when they crossed from Troas to Macedonia.

The great Christian cathedrals — Cologne and Milan, St. Peter's and Notre Dame, Durham, York and Canterbury — are all in Europe; there is nothing to match them in Asia. The Madonnas and Transfigurations, the Crucifixions and Ascensions, which adorn the great galleries, were all painted in Europe. The sublime oratorios, Elijah and Saint Paul, the Stabat Mater and the Messiah, which lift the souls of men heavenward, were all composed in Europe. The great Christian epics of Dante and Milton, the "In Memoriam" of Tennyson and the noble Christian poems of Browning were all written on the continent of Europe. It was the fate of a soul, and that soul the soul of a continent, the soul of a mighty, enduring civilization which Paul bore with him that day when he suffered that interruption of his plans. He was turned by the spirit of him who is from everlasting to everlasting from a lovely little province into a broad continent of moral opportunity.

But this story is not mere ancient history. It is not merely an impressive lesson in geography. It is a broad, thick slice of every-

day experience. The movements of those men indicated in the text are like a page from the life-history of men and women who are sitting in this church. We have all fixed our eyes and set our hearts upon some lovely province only to be faced toward some more magnificent but more difficult continent of spiritual opportunity. Let me study with you then the real content of this passage as it bears upon our personal interests.

First of all, many of our best-laid plans to enter Bithynia fail and have to be abandoned. Bithynia was an open, lovely, inviting region. It has a sky like that of Italy. Its climate is equal to that of California. It stands as a beautiful symbol of a long list of desirable objects.

We lay our plans to possess them, for they seem altogether good. We make those plans not in malice or wickedness but reverently, discreetly, soberly, and in the fear of God. We are not seeking to harm the interests of any of our fellows — we move out possessed of the heartiest good will in all our plans. The entire purpose we cherish is as honest and sincere as the purpose of the apostle when he assayed to go into Bithynia to preach his gospel.

Right there something happens! It may be any one of a hundred things. We may suffer the loss of all our property by fire or flood, by shipwreck or by earthquake. It may be there comes a shrinkage in the value of certain securities and we find ourselves cramped. There

may come a long period of hindering and expensive illness, and when we set forth again we find our former vigor crippled and broken. There may come the death of some dear one with whose life all our plans for happiness are bound up. The disappointment may come in any one of a hundred ways — but it comes. Our plans are torn to pieces and scattered to the four winds. "The best laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft a-gley; and leave us naught but grief and pain for promised joy." We assayed to go into Bithynia, but it could not be done — the Spirit suffered us not. If the hand of the Almighty, heavier than the Matterhorn, had been set across our path, the hindrance could not have been more complete. The plan we made so carefully and lovingly was wrecked.

When boys and girls set out early in the morning with sound health, the good red blood running and leaping and praising God in their veins, the road to Bithynia does not seem long. Their minds are filled to the brim with visions and dreams of possible achievement ahead. They hope to reach Bithynia before night. Their hearts, all undisturbed as yet by the memory of past failures, are beating high with joyous anticipation of all that the beautiful province may be made to yield. It looks like a plain, straight course. There is the place of their desire, there is Bithynia, just this side of the marble domes and minarets of some beautiful Constantinople.

But go to them after twenty, thirty, forty years have passed and you find them in another mood. The road to Bithynia was longer and harder than they had supposed. They have become, many of them, mellow, tender, reminiscent. And alas, some of them by their disappointment have become sour, morose and defiant. It was a steep, rough road they had to travel. There were obstacles and adversaries in every mile of it. Many of them never reached Bithynia at all. The place of their desire in material prosperity, or in genuine achievement in their chosen callings, or in personal happiness, they never reached. It is still away yonder beyond their grasp. "Circumstances," they say, "suffered us not. Our plans were broken and here we are, hundreds of miles from Bithynia." It is a common experience. The only people who never fail are people who never attempt much.

It may be that you were shut out of Bithynia by your own wrongdoing. Your plans broke down and you were compelled to admit that it was your own fault. This is hardest of all. You did not mean to do it! You knew better; your heart was honest, more honest than your deed! But the temptation came and your hand was reached out in the wrong direction. Your lips opened and you uttered words which were not true; and the harm was done. Your will had gone lame and it allowed you to fall into actions which brought defeat to the day dreams of those earlier years.

We understand all about it! Is there a man or a woman past forty who has not done just that? Here we are, miles and miles from that particular Bithynia which once rose before us beautiful and appealing! We can scarcely realize to-day how accessible it once seemed. Our plans failed and we felt a profound sense of disappointment. "Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these, it might have been." The man who might have been, and is not — here is a source of pathos indeed!

In the second place, it ought to be remembered that there is another plan in existence all the while. Paul was vexed when his plan to enter Bithynia went down in defeat. He had a temper, as every man has who achieves anything. He did not know about this other plan as we know it now. He had not seen that man of Macedonia in a vision. He did not know that the moral need, the spiritual hunger of Europe, was fairly beckoning to him across the Ægean. He had not seen his gospel becoming a mighty influence in that city on the seven hills, as he was privileged to see it before he finished his course. He had not seen Geneva and Wittenberg, Canterbury and Edinburgh, there in that new continent of Europe, becoming mighty centers of spiritual power from which Christian influence would radiate to the ends of the earth.

He may have felt that there was some good reason for his not being allowed to enter the little province — he was a man who walked by

faith and not by sight — but the reason was hidden. The whole splendid justification of his disappointment that day lay in the future. If he could have seen, he would have rejoiced. If any man could see that higher, vaster plan which enfolds us, taking up our limitations into its completeness, he would move out on that new line of action, contrary to all his expectations though it might be with a sense of serene joy.

"There 's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will." God knew what he was doing when by the force of circumstances and by the action of his own Spirit on the hearts of men he caused those first fresh impulses of Christian zeal to move north and west rather than to the south and east. They moved in the direction where empire lay. They took the route which enabled them to enlist under the banner of Christ the ruling forces in human affairs in that day and in modern civilization. It was all done in fulfillment of that vaster plan, too far-reaching for immediate comprehension by those men who saw their little plans for Bithynia go down in defeat. In every hour of dark uncertainty, remember that! In every such hour look up and say, "God reigns, let the people rejoice."

The story of George MacDonald's own life has always interested me more than any of his stories. He was ordained as a Congregational minister. He was settled over a small parish with a small salary. He lived simply however and made it suffice. He preached the

truths of the New Testament to the little congregation with great frankness and vigor. But the lines of theology were more tightly drawn then than they are to-day, and one can easily understand how the author of Robert Falconer might not have been quite acceptable to a very orthodox little congregation in old England.

One day the deacons came to him and told him they could not raise his salary any longer. He was simple as a child in his trust — he never suspected their real purpose. "Very good," he said, "give me what you can and I will earn something by writing and by taking a few pupils, and we will manage." But his wife, with a woman's quicker intuition, came to him the next day and said, "George, it is not a question of salary. The people here don't want us because of your teaching." And that ended his first and only regular pastorate. His plan to be a settled Congregational minister went down in defeat. He was too simple and direct for those particular deacons.

He went to the city of Manchester, supporting himself and his family by teaching and by writing books. He preached every Sunday somewhere. He was driven out into an irregular but what proved to be a very much larger ministry. He won a considerable following in Manchester. He then went to London, and first in a suburb and then down among the working people he preached the gospel of the Son of man. The place where he preached came to be thronged.

In a most effective little sketch Dr. William Burnett Wright has described the service as he witnessed it. The people waited in a hush of expectancy. Then George MacDonald came into the pulpit, not in clerical dress — that day he wore a gray suit and a red necktie. He read the Scriptures as he could read them, the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, that morning. Then a simple prayer, then a hymn, and then he began to talk. "We have heard of these men of feyth," he said. "I am not going to tell you what feyth is — there are plenty of clergymen to do that. I am going to try to help you to believe." And he talked for an hour and fifteen minutes. When he finished, the sigh of respiration which accompanies a return to ordinary consciousness and the deep sense of fellowship with a world unseen, testified to the fact that his word was with power. In that suburb of London, then among the working people, then in Italy where he was driven by ill health, he carried on his work as a minister at large. He assayed to go into Bithynia, into some settled parish, but the Spirit — aye, the Spirit, though he used a group of unruly deacons — suffered him not. He was taken away from a little parish and sent forth upon a spiritual ministry which became continental in its influence.

You may have the door shut in your face with a slam. And it may be done under God's own eye to turn your mind away from that petty, meager success into something that has

dimensions and contents. You can afford to let Bithynia go if God is granting you instead a great section of Europe.

Here is a young fellow who thinks he will go into business and make a lot of money, or into law, or medicine, or engineering. Either line will offer him an attractive career — as attractive as Bithynia. But there is no complaint in the world of commerce that there are not men enough there to do the business of the world. The lawyers are not passing resolutions to the effect that there are not lawyers enough to attend to the legal business of the world. When we ride through the streets and see the doctors' signs, we feel that there are physicians enough to take care of the sick people.

But there is a calling where there are not enough of men with energy and good sense, with warm sympathy and genuine character, to furnish spiritual leadership in the work of the ministry. From every state of the Union and from every branch of the church there comes a call for more men of the right sort to enter the ministry. It may be that something will occur to change your plan. If the Spirit should not allow you to enter any of those other professions and should turn your thought and determination to the ministry of Christ you would feel that among all the good things of life God had given you the best. You would feel that you had surrendered a province, in order to possess a continent of opportunity.

We may still encounter difficulties, even when our plans are changed by the Spirit of God. It was so with Paul. When he was obedient to his heavenly vision, when he was true to his best moments following the gleam and not the groove, he still encountered obstacles. You remember what occurred when he crossed the Ægean to help that beseeching man in Macedonia. He did not find any beseeching man. He did not find Europe so eager for the gospel that it could not sleep nights. He found a few bigoted Jews who persecuted him; some half-crazy soothsayers and spiritualists who annoyed him; and some Roman officials who put him in prison. He crossed the Ægean, his face shining and his heart leaping for joy because of the vision he had seen, but before the chapter ends he was in jail. That was what he actually found when his plan for Bithynia went down in defeat and he took a new course.

Nevertheless, his vision was sound to the core. Read on! Read on and you will hear him chanting his hymn of praise as he moves ahead in his Christian work on that continent of Europe. "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear, that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus."

Difficulties — of course there are difficulties! Blessed be God that life is not all easy-going, plain sailing under blue skies and on quiet seas. What a soft, pulpy, characterless lot of people would be turned out at the end of the

voyage if that were all we encountered! Sailors are developed by sailing the high seas in all weathers, not by paddling their canoes around some millpond. Men are made by the same sort of discipline.

"Then welcome each rebuff which bids thee neither sit nor stand, but go." It is facing obstacles and mastering them that transforms boys into men. It is meeting difficulty and disappointment bravely and patiently that lifts the rosy-cheeked girl at last into the nobler beauty of ripened womanhood. Let those plans for the easy, prosperous, joyous career break if they must, provided only that means the gaining of a life ennobled and abundant.

Here were regiments of fat, sleek, well-groomed people sobbing and sighing over the vanity of human existence at the very hour when two celebrated invalids on their beds of pain were singing their songs of hope and high resolve to the whole English-speaking race. Robert Louis Stevenson, lying for months on a sick-bed because he had not strength to either sit or stand, propped up with pillows and coughing his life out with a hopeless disease, was nevertheless writing in rugged story, in splendid verse and in magnificent spiritual appeal those words which bade his fellows play the man. He was playing it himself and his word was with power.

And William Ernest Henley, seeing his cherished plans go down in hopeless defeat before the inroads of disease, was none the less in all

weathers asserting that he was "master of his fate," he was "captain of his soul." The world will not forget his words regarding his own rapidly-approaching death.

> "So be my passing,
> My task accomplished and the long day done,
> My wages taken, and in my heart
> Some late lark singing.
> Let me be gathered to the quiet west,
> The sun-down splendid and serene."

Let your cherished plan break if it must! It may be only a signal from the flagship bidding you tack and shape your course with reference to some vaster, more rewarding achievement.

The one great thing is to keep your heart sensitive so that you will feel the motions of the Spirit. "The Spirit suffered us not to go into Bithynia." I would not dogmatize, but I have a feeling that the obstacle was not outward and visible but inward and spiritual. Paul intended to go into that lovely little province, but when the time came somehow he could not do it. He had to change his course. He was compelled against his own wish to turn aside and tackle that vaster work of planting the banner of Christ upon the continent of Europe. He must make his gospel a dominating influence in the lives of those mightier nations. He had to do it — his heart was tender and sensitive so that he reacted under the touch of the divine spirit impelling him to seek that greater opportunity for Christian service.

If any young man has set forth with the idea that success in life means feathering his own nest, making it soft and warm and comfortable, let him know that his plan will encounter the stiffest sort of opposition at the hands of the Spirit. God does not suffer any man to sink to that level without a struggle to lift him to something better.

And if the young man should persist in that course and gain what he might deem a generous measure of success there in his own little Bithynia he would hear echoes of struggle and achievement on higher levels which would make him feel that after all he had miserably failed.

"In this world ye shall have tribulation" — *thlipsis* was the word Christ used. It means pressure, opposition, difficulty. "But be of good cheer, I have overcome." And because he has, we also in his strength may overcome. Keep your heart sensitive to the divine spirit by right thinking and honest living so that he will be able to turn you here or there as he sees best. Then you may be sure that he will take you forth upon a continent of spiritual opportunity where you will see and do and become all that belongs to the larger life of the children of God.

X

THE MEASURE OF HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

"The heavens are the Lord's
But the earth hath he given to the children of men."
— PSALM CXV, 16.

X

THE MEASURE OF HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

THE men who wrote the proverbs and the psalms felt that it was not good for any truth to be alone. They took single truths and married them, sending them out in pairs. You are all familiar with the literary antithesis and parallelism which runs through those two books. "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish." "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." "A wise son maketh a glad father, but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." "The Lord is thy keeper, the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand." There are hundreds of them, thousands of them — the larger part of the religious instruction in those two books comes to us paired off in couples.

It was more than a pet literary fancy with those men. It was one of the ways by which they secured poise and balance in their teaching. They treated their sentences like boats. They made them trim by loading them on both sides. They knew that a single strong state-

ment standing alone, with nothing heard from the other side of the case, is often misleading and dangerous. The cranks, the bigots, the fanatics are made by having some one tremendous truth aboard. Not being stocked and balanced with other truths, not being well-rounded men, this one big truth capsizes them. These wise old writers formed the habit, therefore, of linking together two truths, thus adding to the literary charm of their style and securing for their teaching a fuller measure of well-rounded completeness.

The text is one of those double statements. "The heavens are the Lord's, the earth he has given to the children of men." You see instantly the picture that hung in the mind of the psalmist. "The heavens" — the sun, the moon and the stars, the walls and battlements of clouds, the sweep and rush of the mighty winds, the fierce glare of the lightning and the gentler ministries of the rain and dew — all these "are the Lord's." They are entirely under his control — man has never gotten his hands on them. Man has never soiled or stained them by his sin. He has never warped or twisted them out of their original purpose by any ugly desire of his own. He has never dragged them down to make them common or unclean.

The heavens are just as God made them. Everything is where he put it — not a hand has touched it since. There is no disorder, for the heavens are the perfect, unchanging ex-

pression of his thought. The sky you saw last night was the one Jesus saw, the one Abraham came out of his tent to see, the one in which the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy. The heavens are unalterably and eternally the Lord's.

But the earth is given to the children of men. The old, familiar earth, with its man-made cities and towns, with its paved streets, its plowed fields, its planted gardens — the prints of men's fingers are upon all these. You can see upon them at this moment the grime and sweat of men's hands. They bear the marks of man's blunders; they share in his littleness; they are spotted here and there by his sin.

The earth is given to the children of men, and men are constantly changing it. They hew down forests and plant fields. They irrigate the desert and make it blossom like a garden. They build barns and banks and stores and then tear them down and build greater. They lay the earth out in streets and lanes that they may travel through it — when they learn to ride swiftly they make a racetrack of it for their railroads and their steamships. The sun in his course looks down each day and sees something new to remind him that the earth is given to the children of men. Here on this common earth we are perpetually working out our thoughts and schemes. While the heavens remain unchangeably the Lord's, the earth is given over to the children of men.

The text suggests these two thoughts, the

limits and the measure of human responsibility. Let me speak of them in order.

When we think of what men have done and are doing we are amazed. They build steel roads and ride across continents at the rate of sixty miles an hour in moving clubhouses. They build their steamships and plow their way through the ocean in all winds and weathers, never deflected from their course by the stress of the storm. They stretch their wires and with a flash of lightning which they have caught and tamed they send their messages around the earth in the twinkling of an eye. They talk with one another in far distant cities, hearing the tones and inflections of the individual voice. They build their great bridges, climbing over the tops of the loftiest masts that the course of traffic, by land or by sea, may suffer no interruption. They bore under the Hudson river and run their trains straight into the heart of Manhattan, landing their passengers on Broadway. In a little more than fifty years they build a city like Chicago, with its wonderful structures and its yet more wonderful life, eager, energetic, mighty. They cut the continents in two at Panama, and join the oceans that ships may pass in a day from the Atlantic to the Pacific. When you think of what man has done and is doing you stand uncovered before his splendid and rapid achievements.

But the simplest of us, by a turn of the face, may look up into a vast field where the earth

is a sand speck, where man has never done anything. The heavens are the Lord's — man has never laid a plank nor driven a stake nor accomplished anything there. Man may think hard and swell with pride; he may bare his arm and walk to and fro with great strides, but the heavens, by their silent majesty, instruct him to be humble. The larger things are all the Lord's.

The universal forces are not under our control. The great abiding order symbolized by the phrase the psalmist used is something which we must accept. We are compelled to sit down before it and say, "Thy will be done." We cannot impose upon it our own wills. When we look down we may be exalted with pride over what we have done on this earth, but looking up into the heavens which are the Lord's we become reverent and modest.

This sense of limitation is conducive to humility. Man's earthly life is in some measure under his control. He may say, "I will live in New York, or in Chicago, or in San Francisco," — and he may go and live there. He may say, "I will live in a frame house, or in a brick house, or in a tent," — and he may build himself such habitation. The earthly life is given to the children of men. But the heavens suggest a life where we feel our helplessness. At death all men become alike poor and dependent. We stand at the open casket and say, "We brought nothing into this world; and it is certain we can carry nothing out."

We have nothing to take with us. We own nothing there; we have built nothing there; we are entering a world where everything is the Lord's. The very thought of it induces the mood where men confess their need of the mercy and help of God. We become as little children that we may enter the kingdom. Whatever may have been our earthly achievements, when we face the heavens we feel our dependence upon him.

In the matter of appropriation also we feel the sense of our limitations. Children love to write their names in the dust of some country road or upon the sand at the beach. And grown people do the same. Men go about writing their names on the earth — "My corner lot, My front yard, My farm! All these broad acres are mine." We fence in our little pieces of soil, for the earth is given to the children of men.

But who owns that stretch of country between the four corners of the Great Dipper? Who holds the title to that strip of territory half a mile up in the air, within ten minutes' walk if we could walk that way? Your eye sweeps over countless infinite acres of open country there in the blue — all that, you say, is the Lord's. Men cannot fence it in nor claim it for private ends. Rise a few hundred feet into the air and human ownership is over. Men may buy and sell, rent and appropriate the earth if they will, but the wider, roomier regions remain unalterably the Lord's.

There is comfort in this thought. The grasping hands of men have taken possession of only one little spot in God's universe — the larger regions which constitute the enduring home of the race are his. Here on earth thousands of people live in narrow, wretched alleys, in crowded tenements, because they can get nothing better. The more prosperous and successful, with stronger hands and clearer heads, have taken up the better portions of the earth. The present inequalities of condition are a standing reproach to our Christian civilization. They constitute a challenge to the Christian conscience. In view of these inequalities which seem inevitable until we have learned the lesson of unselfishness, the thought of the text brings comfort. The present allotments are not permanent. "We have here no continuing city — we seek one." The distribution and the apportionments as they are now made will not stand. The heavens are forever the Lord's, and the man striving to live a true life hears a voice from the unseen say, "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. Whosoever will may come." The soul, in its hour of defeat through the meagerness of its opportunity, need not despair.

The advantages of earth are controlled by the children of men — education and travel, the culture of good books, of fine music, of rare works of art. All these belong to men; they can only be had for money. The poor are

denied them because they must be paid for before they can be enjoyed. But heaven's advantages, the culture of the spirit which comes through prayer, from divine grace, from fellowship with the Most High, from the cherishing of a noble aspiration, from a firmly held hope of life eternal — these are the Lord's. No man can corner these advantages into a monopoly or lock them up in his store to be sold for gain. They are given without money and without price. Whosoever will may take them freely.

And these are the means of culture which enter most powerfully into life. In the building of manhood and womanhood they count as do no other advantages. The daily, hourly culture of striving to live a sincere Christian life, open to any man and every man, exceeds any other single advantage to be named. And these advantages can be had on the easiest terms. Ask and you receive. Seek and you find. Knock and the door opens into the treasure house of the unseen. Blessed be God that he has kept the precious things in his own hands, to be given freely to all who wait upon him for the renewal of their strength.

The sense of limitation is evident also in the matter of control. On many fields of earth man is master. He lays out his railroads and writes their timetables. He arranges his winter trains and his summer trains. He changes the routes as he will. He decides that the Southern Pacific shall no longer run around Great Salt Lake but straight across by the Lucin cut-

off. He decides that this mountain shall no longer remain a barrier — he tunnels straight through it. He will not suffer the river or the bay to impede his advance — he bridges them or bores under them, moving ahead in his triumphant course.

But who maps out the paths the planets take in their courses? Who calls the sun to come out of his chamber, rejoicing like a strong man to run a race? Who appoints the stations where he arrives punctual to the second? The heavens have a map of their own where our little distances are minute. They have a time-card of their own; worlds, planets and suns, in a great, interlocking, interlacing system, rolling, swinging swifter than a thought, without a jar or a mistake. Here there is nothing of human control — here in this perfect harmony we find that which is unchangeably the Lord's.

Men may calculate months in advance the positions of those swiftly moving planets and rely upon their movements with absolute certainty. If you are an astronomer you may know where every heavenly body will be five hundred years from now, and if you should wait and keep the tryst not one of them would fail you. In the last century a total eclipse of the sun was to occur which could be best observed from a point on the west coast of Africa. The English government fitted out an expedition to make the observations. The vessel carried the finest instruments the royal purse could

provide and the most eminent scientists to make an accurate study of the phenomena connected with the eclipse. The expedition arrived at the appointed place; the day of the eclipse came; the hour came. The men of science were standing with their instruments and their chronometers at hand. One of them remarked to another, "Unless we have made some mistake in our calculations the eclipse should begin at once." Instantly the dark edge of the moon was seen starting across the face of the sun! Punctual to a second! The heavenly bodies are the Lord's, and God is never late! Let man with his late trains and his broken appointments confess the uncertainty of all things earthly. The heavens move on in unbroken harmony picturing the methods of the Almighty.

The same principle holds in the spiritual world. Here God has made his own appointments. The way of the transgressor is hard — the orbit of a planet is not more sure. The way of righteousness is a way of peace and joy — the course of the sun is not more certain. The Lord has decreed that men should be saved by repentance and faith, by turning away from evil and by maintaining a certain personal relation to himself. He has put it down in black and white in the Bible, in the moral consciousness of men, and in the accumulated experiences of the ages.

Where men undertake to write new time-cards for the spiritual world, where they under-

take to climb up some other way, they make themselves ridiculous. They might as well undertake to have the sun rise an hour earlier to-morrow morning. They might as well attempt to postpone the full moon for a week next May to meet the needs of some garden party. When we seek to alter the laws of moral advance or to set the spiritual universe running on new lines, we forget that the heavens are the Lord's. Man does not make, nor control, this upper world. Its laws and conditions are established of old. Men are only saved as they conform and adjust themselves to the spiritual order where God is supreme.

But a large measure of responsibility is given to the children of men. The earth is the sphere of our activity and of our obligation. Grace is given, not primarily to take man to heaven but to enable him to order his course in wisdom and conscience here upon the ground. We are not to long for golden streets — it is our part to make our own streets clean and safe. We are not to fix our eyes upon pearly gates — we are to build the gates of these earthly cities high and strong, shutting out the vice and crime which now disfigures. We are to live by the power of an endless life, but live here, grappling with these everyday problems and duties. The earth is given to the children of men as the field where they are to express those principles which come from an eternal world.

Religion is a high and a holy interest. It is fine enough to dress the children of the king

to appear in his courts on the Sabbath. It is fine enough to clothe them to appear before his throne in the world to come. But true religion has a plain and homely quality — it will wash on Monday and wear well throughout the week. It concerns itself with this common earth. It undertakes to so possess men and women by a new spirit that they will show themselves good husbands and good wives, honest employers and faithful employees, kindly neighbors and upright citizens. If the life of earth is made true, pure and kind the final entrance into that heaven which is the Lord's may well be left to him.

The truth in all this seems plain, but it has oftentimes been overlooked. The leaders of the church have become excited and angry in seeking to settle difficult speculative problems which belong in the heavens. The precise relations of the three persons of the trinity; the particular method by which Christ the Son made atonement to God the Father for our sins; the exact measure of the human and the divine entering into the inspiration of the holy Scriptures; the final outcome of the moral processes at work in the judgment which God will visit upon those who fail to do his will — these and many other hard questions have at times occupied a great part of the attention of the Church.

But all these things are too high for us — we cannot attain unto them. They belong in the heavens which are the Lord's. I fancy

that he cares little about the technical correctness of our opinions touching matters altogether beyond our present understanding. When we have done our best our views scarcely amount to a drop in the bucket. We cannot, in the nature of the case, get the infinite ocean of being into our half-pint bottles of theological definition. It matters little whether we say six or six and a half when we are talking of these mighty questions — one stops as far short of infinity as the other. Many of the abstract speculative questions of metaphysics may safely be left in the heavens, which are the Lord's.

But the questions of earth are given to us. How shall we induce men to buy more bread and clothing and books and less rum? How shall we deal with the evils of impurity which smut and stain many a fine soul? How shall we cast out the devils which infest this modern life? How shall we deal with poverty, not simply in alleviation, but in seeking to make people intelligent, industrious, thrifty, as far as may be, self-sustaining? How shall we induce men who have capital to invest and men who have muscle to sell, to be fair and just, to be coöperative and brotherly? How shall we train boys and girls to grow up into Christian life as the only normal mode of living? How shall we bring comfort and cheer to the weary thousands who walk in the shadow of grief, who are crushed by the weary grind, who stagger under heavy loads, who struggle against odds?

How shall we make real the sense of sympathy to those broken hearts who have been disappointed in the dearest aspirations of their lives?

Here are the questions we must face and answer! We can get at them — they are given to the children of men. You met them yesterday; you will meet them to-morrow. You know every wrinkle in their old faces. Here is where the religion of the Lord God is to show itself mighty and helpful. We can afford to detach our minds from some of those distant problems in order to fasten them more firmly upon these questions of earth. Here is the immediate field of our responsibility.

But to get the complete thought of the psalmist we need to hold those two statements in a finer synthesis. "The heavens are the Lord's" — and where are the heavens? Above the earth, to the right of the earth, to the left of the earth, and underneath the earth. The world we know lies immersed, enfolded and enswathed in the heavens. They watch over it from every corner of the sky. With all their suns and stars they look down upon it with eyes that never sleep. They send upon it their ministries of light and warmth and beauty. Each heavenly body, with an arm like God, holds the earth to its course by the grip of gravitation. The heavens are the Lord's, but they take the earth into their keeping and give themselves to it in all their rich helpfulness.

Man's life on earth is surrounded, enfolded

and enswathed by another life. "The Eternal is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms." We rest under the shadow of his wing. We live and move and have our being in him. Our light and warmth came from him. The power which holds us true is "the Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness." The earth enters upon its springtime, upon its new period of promise, by obedience to the mandates of the enfolding heavens. Man rises to his springtime and enters upon a season of nobler fruitage through his coöperation with the unfolding love and power of the Heavenly Father. The earth cannot live without the help of the sky. Man cannot live until he dwells in harmonious relations with the life of God. Live, then, with your feet upon the solid earth, but live also with your head and your heart among the stars.

You may have seen a plant trying to grow under a shed. It had soil enough — it had eight thousand perpendicular miles of earth directly under it. It may be that some man watered it daily and pulled away the hindering weeds. Still it did not grow. It needed the open sky, the sunshine, the dew and the rain. It had the earth and all that man could do for it, but it needed the heavens, which are the Lord's, that it might come to its full planthood and utter itself in a splendid flower.

You cannot grow under some man-made shed which shuts you away from the heavens. Plant your life deep in the earth, if you will.

Let education and travel, art and music, books and companionships do all that they can. Strike your roots deep down into all those earthly elements which furnish material for the abundant life. But when earth's advantages have done their best the half has not been told. See that no shed cuts you off from the open vision of the Lord, from a personal relationship to those spiritual verities which are eternal. See that no doubt or indifference robs you of the sunshine of his favor, of the dew of his grace, of the showers of blessing which wash the life clean and keep it growing. Claim for your life all of earth's advantages which are within your reach, for these are given to the children of men; but claim also the help which comes from out the heaven, which is the Lord's.

"Thou life within my life, than self more near
Thou veiled presence, infinitely clear.
From all illusive shows of sense I flee,
To find my center and my rest in Thee.

"Take part with me against those doubts which rise
And seek to throne Thee in far distant skies;
Take part with me against the self that dares
Assume the burden of these sins and cares."

The heavens are the Lord's and the heavens are here. The heavens are the Lord's, and they stand ready, with all their powers, to minister to this life of earth.

XI

THE HIGH OFFICE OF SYMPATHY

"When Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy . . . and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands." — EXODUS XVII, 11, 12.

XI

THE HIGH OFFICE OF SYMPATHY

IT is not altogether easy to separate the fine threads of poetic insight from the coarser threads of prose fact in this narrative. The story is a coat of many colors and the weave is curious.

The situation was like this: the Israelites were journeying through the wilderness toward the land of promise. They had secured an abundant water-supply among the rocks of Horeb for themselves and their thirsty flocks. The Amalekites, who were the nomads of that region, came out to attack them. Joshua drew up the Israelites in battle array, while Moses, never a fighter, and now an old man past eighty, climbed to the rocky eminence overlooking the field. He wanted to stand where he could see the fighting Israelites; he wanted to stand where the fighting Israelites could see him. And he stood there all day long in the attitude of prayer, stretching out his arms toward heaven as if he would draw down help from above. The very sight of their devoted leader, interceding on their behalf, gave the Israelites fresh courage. They fought all the

harder, " and it came to pass," the author says, " when Moses held up his hands, Israel prevailed! "

But his hands grew heavy; the strain of maintaining unbrokenly that attitude of supplication was severe. The high task of holding himself up to speak face to face with the Almighty, touching that struggle in the plain below, depleted his strength. Now and then he relaxed his effort and lowered his hands.

The battle was so close, the opposing forces so evenly matched, that the sight of their leader at prayer on their behalf or the lack of it was enough to turn the scale. " When Moses held up his hands, Israel prevailed; when he let them down, Amalek prevailed." Then Aaron and Hur came to his support; they stayed up his hands, giving him and giving Israel that visible assurance of their own sympathy. By this reinforcement Moses' hands were steadied, his attitude was secure until the going down of the sun. And with that assistance to their courage, the Israelites discomfited Amalek with the edge of the sword and won a glorious victory.

Let me study with you the implications of that scene. First of all, the very sight of those three men on the rock was an open pledge of human sympathy. It put every Israelite on his mettle. How much our leader cares! His very soul is bound up in this fight we are making for the ideas and principles of Israel as against the lower methods of life represented by

Amalek! He stands there hour after hour making his steady, silent appeal to high heaven on our behalf. He will stand there until the sun goes down to see us win, and win we must!

What a picture of spiritual reality is here painted by this poetic soul! On some higher level of spiritual achievement, won by hard climbing, there stands a soul knit up with your own soul by genuine sympathy. He stands there, as you know, making intercession on your behalf. He is waiting to see you win. And the very sight of his outstretched hands and the thought of his uplifted heart gives you fresh courage and resolve. His readiness to coöperate with you in the fight you are making in the dust of the plain below gives every man of you the strength of two — sometimes the strength of ten. When he lifts up his hands toward the source of help you fight hard and prevail; when he lets them down you are liable to falter and fail.

How splendid is the office of human sympathy, genuinely felt and nobly expressed! It can be seen in many a hard fight where weary men and women are bruised and blood-stained. When the sympathy of true friends lifts itself up into devoted action, the forces of righteousness prevail; when it droops, the lower elements of human nature, doubt, despair, bitterness, have their chance for victory. Three men on a rock, somewhere, indicating that your fight is their fight also, as they carry you in their hearts, will suffice to turn the scale. You will

be moved to summon all your reserves into action and fight it through to a finish.

And what a loss is involved in the absence of that sympathy! The hardest battles do not come where men are marching in solid ranks with flags flying, drums beating, and shouts of coming victory bursting from ten thousand throats. The hardest battles are fought where some soul faces its own doubts and defeats, its own sorrows or its own sins, and struggles with them alone.

Here is a growing boy, seeing the mystery of life through a glass darkly. He is tormented by the memory of mistakes already made and fearful of worse things yet to come, but unwilling or unable to bring himself to confide in one who might bring relief — he is fighting it out alone. Here is an unhappy woman, tossing to and fro on her bed through some long, lonely night, hearing the hours and half-hours strike, but unsustained by the sense of any real companionship in her trouble — she is treading the wine-press alone! Here is a man plunging out into the night, unable to sit still, going on and on, he knows not where, his mind grinding away on some terrible crisis which has come to him — he, too, is carrying this bitter cup, wondering whether he shall drink it or fling it away. Here are a father and mother staggering under some cruel sorrow, each trying to be brave for the sake of the other and each one going ever and anon to fight the battle alone! You know all about it —

— many of you do. In that hour of loneliness and defeat how much you need that expression of sympathy which comes from the sight of someone lifting up his hands and his heart toward Heaven for you.

It is a universal need. We find it in the Son of Man. He knew the pain of loneliness in that moral crisis in his own career. He reached out hungrily for human sympathy. "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" It was not the whine of some weak soul. It was the word of One who could say, "I lay down my life for the sheep. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again." He was no weakling. But he was in Gethsemane. He had seen the hollowness of that popular enthusiasm which one day shouted "Hosanna" and the next day turned away in thoughtless indifference or helped swell the cry against him. He saw his own life ennobled by its record of unwearied service and radiant with benign purpose, destined to be nailed upon a cross between two thieves. It was a terrible cup to be put into the hands of one who came to heal the broken-hearted and to set at liberty them that are bruised. He went into the garden to pray and he said to the three men, Peter, James and John, "Watch with me! Watch with me one hour." He wanted to feel them near, awake and sympathetic. But when he looked upon them presently, they were all asleep.

Many a life goes down in defeat for the lack

of a friendly eye, awake and open, for the lack of a warm heart ready with its love, for the lack of a strong hand stretched out to help. The pity of it is that any life might have all three. The growing boy, anxious and troubled, would better confide in his father or in the old family physician or in some broad-minded, big-hearted friend — there is always someone who would watch with him all the hours needed and thank God for the chance. The woman in trouble would better open her heart somewhere — the impulse which craves sympathy is of God. The business man breaking his heart and his health over some financial problem because he feels unwilling to cloud the sky of the woman he loves, would better take her into his confidence. He will find her stronger and truer than he ever dreamed. Her happiness does not consist in the abundance of things he possesses but in him; and she would rejoice to share his burden. And if somewhere in sight there was another life maintaining that attitude of sympathy shown by those three men, Moses, Aaron and Hur, on that jutting point of rock, it would change defeat into victory.

The careless observer might have seen on the plains of Horeb only a petty squabble between some nomads of the desert. But in reality it was the everlasting struggle between the higher and the lower. It was that nation to whom God had said, "I will bless thee and thou shalt be a blessing and in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blest," pitted

against a tribe which never wrote a book nor produced a prophet nor did anything to prepare the way of the Lord. It was the race which caught the first gleams of monotheism, fighting against idolators. It was the race which carried in its ark of the Covenant and in the bosom of its own life the moral principles embodied in the ten commandments, fighting against a race of thieves, liars and libertines. It was the cause of righteousness which was being fought out that day, and to the men who were battling for the right, however dimly they understood the mighty significance of it all, it meant everything to have those three leaders stand on the rock until the sun went down pledging their interest and their sympathy.

In one of the dramatic stories of the Old Testament we find a strong man under a juniper tree. He was called "Elijah, the Tishbite," and his nature was as rugged as his name. But there he was, stretched out full length, sobbing as if his heart would break. Yesterday he faced four hundred priests of Baal and won his victory over them as the champion of pure worship and clean living. To-day you hear this whine from his lips, "Oh, Lord, take away my life! I only am left to worship Jehovah."

But a messenger of the Lord came to this discouraged man and fed him. He told him to lie down and get a good night's sleep. In the freshness of the following morning at the be-

ginning of a new day, he assured the tired prophet that there were seven thousand people in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal. He then told Elijah to stand up and do his duty before God and man.

All this was reassuring, but what were those seven thousand people doing that day when Elijah stood on Mount Carmel alone, fighting the battle of righteousness? "The priests of Baal are four hundred and fifty men and I only remain a prophet of Jehovah." He had around him a company of people halting between two opinions. They were trying to carry water on both shoulders. They were not of the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal! But why were not some of those seven thousand reserves on hand? If there had been a dozen of them, or even three of them, like Moses, Aaron and Hur, on some point of rocks, holding aloft their sympathetic interest in the struggle, Elijah might not have been under the juniper tree.

Many a man fighting hard for a principle in politics or standing strongly for finer methods in commercial life goes down in defeat for the lack of just such openly and loyally expressed sympathy. The minister of Christ seeking out some man who is being worsted in the moral struggle often sees on that face a look of gratitude and, alas, of surprise. The man will say with a tremor in his voice, "I did not suppose anybody cared whether I went to the devil or not." The young fellow fighting with all his

might to keep his life clean in the face of temptation, struggling to maintain his honesty where he sees all kinds of successful stealing in operation, striving to keep his Christian faith in the presence of intellectual difficulties which seem to be tearing it to pieces, needs tremendously the presence and help of sympathetic friends. If there were three friends in sight, holding up their hands as a visible expression of their interest, he would be nerved for the struggle and aided toward victory. And there are enough of us to go around — there are enough to furnish three such friends for every fight that is on.

In the second place, the presence of those three men in the attitude of prayer became a pledge of divine help. When Joshua buckled on his armor and started for the field Moses said, "I will stand at the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand." You recall the history of that famous rod. It was the shepherd's crook, which he had carried when he kept his flocks in the land of Midian. He carried it with him in a loftier consecration when he went to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. When he stretched it forth at the word of the Lord, it became the harbinger of those awful plagues, those terrible judgments which fell upon the oppressors of the people. He bore it with him through the wilderness, using it to draw water from the rocks for the thirsty Israelites. It had become invested with a

mystic significance in the eyes of that ancient people. It was clothed with an august and mysterious power. It was like a lightning-rod piercing the clouds of heaven and becoming the conductor of forces unseen as they were safely and usefully brought to earth. "I will go aloft with the rod of God in my hand." And all day long the figure of Moses with the rod of power, standing out against the Syrian sky, making his appeal to heaven, brought to the people fighting on the plain below a firm assurance of divine help.

It indicates a service which any devout soul can render. It indicates a service which many can render who are not themselves in the thick of the fight. The three men on the rock that day were old men, each one of them past eighty. They were not able to fight with the Amalekites in the plain below. But the sun need never go down on the day of spiritual effectiveness. Dr. Osler said some time ago that a man past sixty was no longer of much account. Dr. Osler himself has passed his sixtieth birthday since then — perhaps he has revised his statement; we have not heard of his taking himself off the field of action. He has probably moved the limit up, as we all do when the years come and go. But there is no dead line in spiritual achievement, because the spiritual life is a life eternal. The figures of those three old men on the jutting rock, their white hair glistening in the sun of that clear sky, kindled the enthusiasm of the younger men

fighting the Amalekites in the plain below. Their attitude of prayer became a constant pledge of divine help to the men on the firing line.

You may not be called into the heat and shock of the stern battle below, but you can help mightily by your faithful intercession. Many a man stands to his guns and fights it through by the aid of a little woman scarcely five feet high. Wendell Phillips was fighting the battle for the abolition of human slavery when that cause was most unpopular. He stood up and uttered his message, and it was a word with the bark on. The rabble answered back with stale eggs and brickbats and with curses, fouler and harder than either the eggs or the bricks. He was a man of culture; a graduate of Harvard, an aristocrat in all his social affiliations. It was no easy task for him to face all this. His wife was an invalid lying at home in a darkened room for months and months, while the struggle went on. He would go to her room to kiss her good-night before he went out to address one of those troubled meetings, and she would look up into his face and say, "Now, Wendell, don't shilly-shally." When the man went out with those words in his ears and with that woman's kiss on his cheek, he did not shilly-shally. He put it straight until the conscience of the nation was stung into action.

In every house there should be at least one who can go aloft with the rod of God. Your husband may be compelled to go forth and fight

the devil of greed and of graft, of trickery and of oppression while you remain sheltered. Your son may be called to face such enemies of sobriety, purity and honesty as you have never seen in all your life. Your daughter may feel the pull of a society where the current mood is one of showy ostentation and empty frivolity such as you never felt in your own simpler, saner girlhood. In all the shapes and forms of evil the Amalekites come out against the higher life to work upon it their wretched will. It is for you to say in those beautiful and effective ways which the true woman knows, "I will go aloft with the rod of God in my hand; and when I lift it up, my loved ones will prevail."

When I see the situation where thousands of men are fighting it out six days in the week; when I walk through certain streets in this city and think that untaught, untried boys will walk there too; when I see young women with their wages so near the danger line that unless they are splendidly fortified with moral stamina they will be tempted, having sold their days to greed, to sell their nights to shame; when I meet Satan in all his forms carrying it off with a high hand, and an alluring grin, I am moved to utter a great indictment against those women who are content to go their way, thoughtless, prayerless, godless. In the name of Heaven, cannot they realize how sorely they are needed! There are wives and mothers who find time to play bridge for hours together every week, yet never from month's end to month's end do

they devote one complete hour to the high task of teaching their children the truths of religion or of lifting up the spiritual needs of their families in prayer to God.

It need not be on any jutting point of rocks — it were better that the woman enter her closet and shut the door. There in secret let her pray to the Father, who seeth in secret; and because of the reality, the persistence, the loving fidelity of her prayer, the Father who seeth in secret will reward her openly in the spiritual victories of those she loves. If you never did it before in your life, do it to-day! Take the rod of God in your hand and make intercession on behalf of those who struggle with evil. They are liable to fail for lack of your help. In some strange way they will know that you are there and understand. They will be nerved by your sympathetic interest and by that fervent prayer which availeth much, to make that final effort which will bring them off conquerors.

Great decisive battles are to be fought by this generation of boys and girls, now coming upon the field. Strongly fortified positions of evil are to be taken and the banner of Christ made to float there. Mighty fortresses of greed and shame are to be thrown down and the chariots of the Lord are to drive over them in triumph. The form of the battle will vary — now it will be personal, now social; here industrial, there political. But whatever form it takes, the battle will not be fought entirely upon

the ground. The work of those who stand yonder, stretching the rod of God heavenward will be clothed with splendid significance. The brute strength for the struggle may be formed from the dust, but the living soul of the movement for betterment will be breathed from on high. Joshua, the fighter, caught his vision of the divine in the figure of an armed man, standing outside the walls of Jericho. Moses saw the finger of God in the writing of those moral principles which were to rule the ages. Both types of men were needed for the ultimate victory — Joshua, taking the field with his sword in his hand; and Moses, lifting his rod of power heavenward that the cause of righteousness might prevail.

You cannot rush out and secure that high quality of efficient sympathy or that power of successful intercession at a moment's notice when an emergency arises. Moses had been carrying that mystic rod which brought down blessings from above for many years. It reached back to the days of his youth. He had borne it as a young man, keeping the flocks of Jethro. He had borne it in the stress of those terrible days when the plagues of God fell upon the oppressors of the people along the banks of the Nile. He had stretched it out in the darkness of that awful night when the Israelites trembled on the shores of the Red Sea, hearing the approach of Pharaoh's chariots and horsemen. He had used it in those days when he refreshed and instructed the

murmuring people in the desert. Now, invested as it was with the precious memories and associations which sprang from a long life of abiding trust, he held it aloft with the high confidence of a ripened saint.

If your sympathy and your prayer are to turn the scale in some hard hour for those who struggle with the enemies of righteousness in the plain below, you, too, must prepare yourself against that day. You must live the life of abiding trust and faithful devotion through all these intervening years. The spiritual efficiency of the righteous soul able in the face of terrible odds to avail much is bought with a great price.

Let me say this final word — in every man's soul this entire scene is reënacted every day in the year. In every heart Israel and Amalek, the higher and the lower, fight hand to hand for the mastery. In every heart there is an eminence where the best that is in you may go aloft and stretch out toward heaven its beseeching faith begotten of experience. While your personal will is struggling on the lower plane of physical inclination, of the mad desire for gain, and of the wish for selfish ease, there will come to you from that upper level of your nature supplies of strength, drawn from a source, unseen and inexhaustible! The coming of these mighty allies will be like the tread of marching men. They will bring victory and you, too, will come off more than conqueror through him who loves us.

XII

GREATER THINGS AHEAD

"Thou shalt see greater things than these." — JOHN I, 50.

"And greater works than these shall he do, because I go to my Father." — JOHN XIV, 12.

"Ye shall be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect." *(R. V.)* — MATTHEW V, 48.

XII

GREATER THINGS AHEAD

THE military command "Eyes Front!" has its counterpart in the work of the prophet. When we study the Hebrew prophets we find some of them looking back. They have their eyes on the past. They recognize the moral failure of Israel, and their hearts are heavy. When their message comes it is half sob and half censure. They are the prophets of Judgment.

But there is another group of prophets where the men have their eyes to the front; they are looking ahead. They are not unmindful of the moral tragedies wrought by wrongdoing, but they have caught a vision. They see another kingdom which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. They see a greater king, a coming Messiah, afar off but faced toward them. They see light shining in a dark place and destined to illumine the whole earth. And when these men with eyes front speak, their utterance is a song of cheer — they are the prophets of hope.

It is profoundly significant that when Christ, the greatest of the prophets, came, he took his

stand definitely with the prophets of hope. He struck the keynote of his whole ministry in that opening address at Nazareth. "The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. He hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives and to set at liberty them that are bruised."

In the book of Isaiah, where he found this text for his first address, the rest of the verse reads — "and to proclaim the day of vengeance of our God." He omitted that clause. It did not match his mood. He had not come to condemn the world, but to save the world. He saw the sin of the race. He knew what was in man and needed not that any should tell him. But he saw also the sovereign moral interest of the Father in every soul he had created. He felt the renewing power of divine grace, and in the face of everything he boldly took his stand with the prophets of hope.

Now in the light of that attitude which was fundamental with our Lord, I wish to indicate three lines of expectation, which we are warranted in cherishing:

In the first place, "Ye shall see greater things than these." He said that early in his ministry. He said it to a man who had just enrolled himself as a disciple. This man, standing in the presence of that august manifestation of life, cried out, "Rabbi, thou art the King of Israel, thou art the Son of God!" Jesus answered, "Thou shalt see greater

things than these. Thou shalt see heaven open." He was to see a whole upper realm of spiritual forces clear and plain, the angels of God coming and going on their ceaseless errands of spiritual recovery and moral enrichment. He was to see that spiritual order which towers above the common grind as the Matterhorn lifts itself above the valley of the Rhone. He was to see heaven open, operative, efficient.

Are not these words being fulfilled in our ears? May it not be that we are even now on the outskirts of a great revival of religion? This revival may not come with observation and headlines. It may not come arrayed in the conventional robes of ecclesiastical procedure. It may not gather people into monster aggregation meetings, or set them to signing cards and putting up their hands. All this is secondary.

We are witnessing a strong reaction against materialism as a philosophy of life. The best philosophy and the best science of our day are insisting that ultimate reality is not matter, but sentient mind or spirit. The wide currency and immense influence of Bergson and Euchen among scholars testify to this tendency in all serious thinking on fundamental problems.

We are witnessing a widespread insistence upon the immediate utility of spiritual forces for increased health, for personal happiness, and for general well-being. It is an insistence which here and there becomes wild and reckless. When a man has been stooping and sud-

denly straightens up, he is apt to lean over backward for a moment or two before assuming his normal position.

We have seen the amazing circulation of such books as those of Ralph Waldo Trine — books scarcely worthy of serious consideration either from a philosophic or a literary point of view, but of immense significance as symptoms bearing witness to the fact that hundreds of thousands of people in this land are athirst for the living God. They are not satisfied with the gospel of material comfort. They want to be "In tune with the Infinite."

We are witnessing the resolute demand for economic justice, for a more democratic spirit in the control of industry, for a more equitable distribution of the results of the toil of brain and of hand. The insistence upon a safeguarding of the moral values at stake in the whole work of production has never in the history of the world been so intelligent and determined.

We are witnessing a tremendous impulse toward civic righteousness which has enlisted a large section of the best brain and heart of the land in seeking to make the powers that be "ordained of God."

These are all tokens of spiritual quickening. I am aware that to some minds they might not seem like orthodox signs of religious awakening. They are not sufficiently ecclesiastical. They do not pronounce the party shibboleth with just the right accent. But the purpose of God is not bound. It never has been bound by

usage and ceremony. It has been his way to constantly surprise his chosen people by sending some better thing than they had hoped. The Hebrews were sound in their prediction of a coming Messiah, but they were so inaccurate in many of the details that most of them did not know him when he came. What they expected never came — something better came. The early Christians looked for the speedy and visible return of Christ to earth. They were right in expecting that the risen Christ would make himself at once a more effective factor in human affairs, but they were mistaken as to the method. What they looked for did not come — something better came. In the wide diffusion of his spirit, in the more complete enthronement of his ideals, in the steady exaltation of those principles for which he stood, he has come again, and is coming, and will continue to come until all shall know him, from the least to the greatest.

The quickening of interest in spiritual forces in our day has come by methods of God's own choosing. "By men of strange lips and with another tongue will I speak unto my people, saith the Lord." The modern pulpit is a movable pulpit. Men are setting it up in all sorts of unconventional quarters. The office of the preacher has been widely extended to make room for all the men who have a message to deliver. From the pages of the serious magazine and the weekly paper, from the dinner table at great banquets, from many unexpected

and unordained sources, the word of the Lord rings out.

In the colleges and universities the number of aspiring young men who have some sort of public service in mind was never so great. In the world of popular estimate where applause is given or withheld according to the judgment of the many, it was never so plain that if a man would be great, he must serve. The greatest of all is not the man who can exercise lordship or attain affluence, but the man who can best serve the common interest. In all of these directions we find substantial signs of spiritual quickening.

Ye shall see heaven open, operative, efficient. The divine spirit is functioning widely and powerfully in this intricate modern life. I should despair utterly if I did not believe with all my heart that the promise quoted is in process of fulfillment. It is our final dependence. The better order of life is not to be formed solely from the materials of this common earth. It cannot be ushered in by merely making the selfish efforts of men more skillful and more resolute. It is to descend out of heaven from God. It is to come bringing with it the atmosphere of a higher world. And it is because Christian men believe in God, and in the realization of the will of God, and in the consequent coming of the kingdom of God, that they are able to stand in the very thick of this modern struggle and speak with the accent of spiritual authority. They are not alone — the

Father is with them. It is by the more effective utilization of those unseen forces symbolized by the "open heaven" that the renewal of personal character and the regeneration of organized society are to be achieved.

In the second place, "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to the Father." This is strong meat! It has been a stumbling-block to many. "Greater works than these" — none of the disciples ever walked across the Sea of Galilee on the water; none of the disciples ever changed water into wine. But Jesus did not say greater wonders, he said "greater works" — greater in their scope and variety, greater in their continuity and wide utility. By the power of his grace and under the guidance of his spirit we are actually doing the greater works.

To establish in the heart of Christendom a sense of obligation toward the blind, the sick, and all the defective of earth, resulting in such wise, humane and generous treatment of their ills as was never dreamed of in the time of Christ, is a greater work than to open the eyes of one blind man at the Pool of Siloam. To awaken and develop the sentiment of humanity which leads to the organization and maintenance of hospitals for the poor in all our cities, to the sending out of District Nurses into all the streets and alleys whither he himself would come, and to the founding of Medical Missions in all the lands of earth, is a greater work than to lift one lame man into

sound health at the gate of the temple called Beautiful. And to put upon the conscience of Christendom a new sense of responsibility for all these countless helpless lives bound with severe toil, and make the resolute demand that they shall have a more equitable share of the comforts they help to create, is a greater work than to feed five thousand hungry men once at the Sea of Galilee.

When Jacob Riis, a Christian man, aroused other Christian men and women to take hold of the lower East Side of New York, and by replacing unsanitary tenements with decent dwellings and parks and playgrounds changed the whole face of the situation for thousands of struggling people, it was not a greater wonder, but it was a greater work than it would have been for Jacob Riis to have walked across the Hudson River on the water. When John G. Paton went to the New Hebrides and changed the lives of those filthy cannibals into lives of Christian men, clothed, educated, and aspiring, by preaching and living the Christian Gospel, it was not so great a wonder as it would have been for him to have changed a bucket of water into a bucket of wine, but it was a greater work. "Greater works than these shall ye do" — in the scope and variety, in the continuity and wide utility of Christian achievement we are witnessing the fulfillment of this majestic promise.

And the end is not yet — we have just begun! We are just scratching the surface where the

full possibilities of these spiritual forces lie hidden. We are just starting on that type of Christian service which says, boldly, "The field is the world." The field is the world extensively, for it includes within the scope of our moral interest Japan and China, India and Africa. The field is the world intensively, for it includes the mill and the mine, the factory and the farm. The redemption and transfiguration of this big, blooming, buzzing confusion, called "the world," is the huge task to which religion is set.

The great field where men buy and sell, where they teach and learn, where they marry and rear families, where they organize states and enact laws, where they also pray and adore — this whole system of activity called "the world" is the field where the seed of religion is to be put down under the surface and made to grow. It is the only field large enough to yield that harvest which shall fill the garners of the Lord and satisfy the travail of his soul. The moral recovery and the spiritual transformation of that great, wide area of human interest is the greater work to which the men of our generation are called.

Our hope that this greater work can be accomplished rests down upon two fundamental facts; we believe in the human capacity for response to an ideal. In the Middle Ages there was poured out a stream of treasure and enthusiasm, of life and of love, in the Crusades which is the amazement of history. It was only

a poor, disappointing ideal which thus stirred the heart of Europe when the appeals of Peter the Hermit and Bernard of Clairvaux rang out — it was only the re-taking of the tomb where once the dead body of Christ was laid for an hour, but it was an ideal. And to that imperfect ideal the undying capacity of the human heart for moral heroism made its magnificent response.

It is a vaster, higher and holier ideal which makes its appeal to our generation. We are bent upon the recovery of these great sections of modern life where the Saracens of greed, of lust, and of fraud are encamped. These enemies of our Lord scorn the Christian ideal. They bid defiance to the will of the Most High, and we are sent to recover from the hand of the enemy these living souls in whom the spirit of the risen Christ seeks to dwell forevermore.

This vaster ideal is slowly taking shape in that social interest and social sympathy which have become the dominant notes in the moral life of this generation. No Peter the Hermit or Bernard of Clairvaux has yet appeared to unlock that store of enthusiasm requisite for this harder task, but when he comes the conscience of this nation will make its mighty response. There will come forth a marching host set upon the reign of righteousness, peace and good-will, causing the kingdom of God to advance by leaps and bounds. This troubled situation where we find ourselves is not final

—greater and better work than this shall we do.

Our confidence rests, also, upon the invincible will of God. "Fear not, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom!" He finds his highest joy in aiding men toward that great achievement. We may hasten or we may hinder the accomplishment of his will by fidelity or infidelity, but the kingdom which Christ proclaimed is sure to come. "It is the will of God!" the old Crusaders shouted as they faced toward the Holy Sepulchre and lined up against the Saracens. "It is the will of God!" these knights of the Cross are crying as they set forth to recover the social life from the grip of evil and to transform it until it shall shine by the indwelling spirit of the living God. We shall see a nation of free men organized in righteousness and acting in the spirit of intelligent good-will for the coming of that perfect kingdom here on earth.

And once more, "Ye shall be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." I quote this statment as it stands in the Revised Version; it is a promise rather than a command. It was spoken originally on a hillside in Galilee to a company of faulty men. One man in the group was destined to lie, denying his Lord with an oath; another would openly doubt him in the face of all his rich experience of Christ's fidelity; most of them would show themselves cowards and quitters when the day of stress came. They were all imperfect, yet there

stands the promise in its full strength — "Ye shall be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect."

In the light of what Jesus saw of the unrealized capacity for spiritual advance in every soul and in the light of the sovereign moral interest of the Father in every child created to bear his image, he could say nothing less. It holds before us an endless task, and it carries with it an assurance of our own immortality. If we are to achieve so much, the opportunity must be commensurate with the task. If I am asked to read all the books in the British Museum, I realize that it cannot be accomplished in threescore years and ten — I know that the very command carries with it the pledge of an adequate opportunity. When I hear this promise from the lips of moral authority, "Ye shall be perfect," and feel the response it awakens in the yearnings and aspirations of my own soul, I know that the opportunity for spiritual advance will likewise be adequate.

We find an earnest of ultimate success in the history of the race. We judge these human lives as we judge lines in geometry, not so much by their present position as by the direction they take. If two lines are exactly parallel, no matter how closely they may lie, you may project them indefinitely, yet they will never meet. But if the two lines converge ever so little, though they lie as far apart as the North Pole and the South Pole, you may project them

with full assurance that somewhere they will meet. The direction they take is the determining fact.

In human life the solid fact of moral progress is unmistakable. The direction humanity has taken in its age-long movements furnishes us a splendid confirmation of these prophetic words which fell from the lips of Christ. Up out of a brutish ancestry in prehistoric times, up out of moral conditions coarse and terrible since credible history took up the record, there has come this fairer, sweeter, nobler life we know to-day.

And the direction is still upward and onward. Where ships are a thousand miles at sea under full sail, with all the breezes of heaven blowing on them we know that they will go farther. Jesus speaks here to the moral aspiration of the race, and his word of promise corroborates the best we know and feel. The destiny of man is a destiny of moral progress with this goal in view — "Ye shall be perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

What a magnificent expectation to march at the head of the advancing host! Ye shall see, ye shall do, ye shall be! Because history is a progressive unveiling of the divine face and purpose, we shall see greater things than men have yet seen. Because men of faith, working out their own salvation, are conscious that God is working within them to perform his good pleasure, we shall do greater and ever greater work. And because the purpose of the ages

stands announced at the threshold of Scripture, "Let us make man in our image," we shall at last be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect. This is the great expectation moving ahead like a pillar of fire and guiding the race through dreary sands and bitter waters into the land of promise.

XIII

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE UNDER CHANGED CONDITIONS

"How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" — PSALM CXXXVII, 4.

XIII

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE UNDER CHANGED CONDITIONS

HOW often you hear the children of God singing! When Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and across the Red Sea they stood on the shore singing. It was a brave, glad song — "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he cast into the sea." When the ancient Hebrews brought up the ark of the covenant from its narrow tent into the temple Solomon had built, they were singing! "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."

When Jesus and his disciples celebrated the last supper in the upper room they sang a hymn before they went out into the Garden of Gethsemane. It was the old Paschal hymn which the Jews have been singing for thirty centuries. When Paul and Silas were unjustly imprisoned in that Philippian jail the other prisoners heard them singing at midnight. It was just before the earthquake which shattered the walls of the prison and all hearts were reassured by that song of hope sounding through

the corridors. And when at last the redeemed host stands before the great white throne the people are singing. They sing "the song of Moses and the Lamb," the song of moral order and redemptive love. You can scarcely get beyond the sound of music anywhere in the pages of God's holy word.

It is altogether fitting that it should be so. Music can be made the noblest expression of Christian aspiration. "When we find religion standing on its feet and working with its hands, it is morality. When we find religion thinking hard upon fundamentals and striving to ground its hope in moral reason, it is theology. But when we pierce to the heart of it and find it in the mood of worship and aspiration, it is always a song." Those sentiments of faith and hope and love which issue from the lips of believing men and women in hymns of praise have wonderful power.

But here in the text was a group of religious people who refused to sing. They were Jews, but they had been carried away captive into the haughty, pagan city of Babylon. Away yonder to the west, across hundreds of miles of mountain and plain, was the soil they loved. Palestine was the place of their desire. The wealth and gayety of this foreign capital did not appeal to them for one moment. They were homesick, wretched and bitter. And when those who had taken them captive asked them to sing one of the songs of Zion for the entertainment of Babylon, as a company of

Northern people might ask a group of negroes to sing some old plantation melody, the Jews resented it. They answered, mournfully perhaps, but indignantly, we know, for the last words of this psalm are harsh, "How can we! How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land!"

In the face of all their shattered hopes they did not feel like singing. They might possibly have repeated the ten commandments. They might have recited some creed statement indicating their belief in one true and living God, who had sustained them in those hard days. They might have opened their hearts to make some costly sacrifice, as an act of worship. Any one of these things they might have done. But to set the choicest sentiments they had to music and cause them to flow forth in gracious melody seemed to them impossible. They hung their harps on the willows and sat down in gloomy silence. They could not sing the Lord's song under those changed conditions, and the song was left unsung.

What a picture of these lives of ours as we know them! There are men and women who, by the shores of the Sea of Galilee or on the slopes of some lovely Mount Hermon, sang the Lord's song with hearts full of joy. But the hour came when they found themselves in a strange land. The conditions were all changed and all foreign to their wish. The walls which shut them in were as hateful in their eyes as were the walls of Babylon to those captive

Jews. And then the words of the old song of hope and cheer would not come. "How can we sing the song of faith and hope and love," they said, "under these changed conditions where our lot is now cast?" They went on repeating the ten commandments and keeping them. They still recited some sort of confession of faith, broken, it might be, in places. They still opened their hands to do good, even where it involved sacrifice. But the joy and zest, the relish and enthusiasm they once felt in Christian life and service were gone. They had not learned to sing the Lord's song under these changed conditions.

The policy of silence involved a serious loss to those ancient Israelites. When they allowed the Lord's song to die from their lips they lost some portion of their love for the Lord himself out of their hearts. They lived along in that strange land until in great measure they forgot the Lord's land. The right hand did not forget its cunning, but the heart forgot its attachment to Jerusalem. When their release came some years later and they had a chance to return to Palestine, only one in seven of them cared to go. The rest of them had become Babylonians, doing in Babylon as the Babylonians did. In large measure it was due to the fact that they had neglected to sing the Lord's song in that strange land.

This involved a loss to the Babylonians also, whose hearts might have been touched by music of a higher order. They might have heard a

message from the Eternal in those songs of Zion. Imagine the effect of hearing a company of exiled Hebrews there in the valley of the Euphrates singing, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord." Imagine the effect of hearing those Hebrews, hundreds of miles from their native land, singing, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem." The Hebrews would better have sung the Lord's song in that strange land, for their own sakes and for the sake of those who would have heard them.

What are some of the causes which silence the lips of God's people in our day? It may be a change in outward condition. You can think of people who were religious when they were prosperous. They found satisfaction in the worship and in the work of the kingdom. They were happy in their gifts to benevolence and in the exercise of the grace of Christian hospitality. But reverses came. They lost their money and now they are sore. They feel sometimes that their old friends are avoiding them, simply because they themselves have drawn back into their shells. They may think that God has forgotten them because they are not able to do as much for his cause financially as they once did. They hang their harps on the willows and refuse to sing. They are not bad people, but they no longer count in active Christian service.

You can think, also, of those who travel this same road in exactly the opposite direction. In the old, simple conditions, when they were in modest circumstances, they were Christians, earnest, active, useful. But wealth came and a great house, with its luxury and display. Steam yachts and automobiles, social dissipation and incessant travel all helped to change the entire mood of their lives. Spiritual indifference crept in and an utter neglect of the old ways. The saying of grace disappeared from the table, and the feeling of grace faded out of the heart. There was no room for the Church in this crowd of pushing interests. The Lord's song went unsung, month after month, until the children of those men and women who once were earnest Christians scarcely knew how that song sounded. These friends did not learn "how to abound," by serving God with their abundance.

You find those who stopped singing because sorrow came in the death of one they loved. They are plunged in gloom and they propose to remain there. It accomplishes nothing to assure them that this is the last thing that dear one, standing in the light where there is no darkness at all, would have them do. "It is a strange land," they say, "this land of grief," and no Lord's song will rise from their lips.

You find those who cease to sing because of the new joys they have experienced. The bride and groom in the sweet pleasure of their love

and of the home they have established; the young father and mother in the joyous possession of that child born to them in the providence of God; the restored invalid, lifted from his sick-bed into such physical vigor as he feared might never be his again, and now rejoicing in the full enjoyment of the glad outdoors — all these, and scores of other happy experiences, leading men and women into the new and bewildering delights of some strange land, serve to obscure the old interests of worship and service, until they fail through sad neglect.

What a loss, and what an unnecessary loss! Every added experience, sweet or bitter, should increase one's power to sing God's praise and to make the life tell for the coming of his kingdom. Many people never sing with real effectiveness until they pass through some period where they feel as if they might never be able to sing again. When Jenny Lind began to give her concerts in Europe a music master listened and nodded his head approvingly. "It is glorious," he said, "glorious. But if she could only suffer for a year she would sing like an angel." A little later she suffered for more than a year. She carried with her a broken heart, and when she opened her lips again it was like the song the angels sang that night in the skies above Bethlehem. Right here under the stress of that heavy burden you carry; right here beneath the shadow of that sorrow which hides the sun and all the stars;

right here with that feeling of depression which comes from the sense of defeat, sing the Lord's song. Because you have suffered, the music your life utters will carry new and deeper notes.

We are told sometimes that modern congregations cannot be made to sing; that it is contrary to the mood and temper in which people live; that the present attitude toward religion is intellectual and practical rather than mystical and devotional; and that all this is fatal to music.

It is not so in all congregations. It would be a sad loss if that were true of any congregation. We cannot live by bread alone, or even by bread and books. We want the clear light of knowledge and the plain utility of humane service, but we want also that warmth of sentiment and that enthusiasm in devotion which find their fullest expression in Christian song.

The late Frederic Harrison had a keen dislike for everything emotional or mystical in religion. He founded a School of Positive Philosophy, and Sunday services were held in London, where they had an abundance of intellectual daylight and nothing else. He was learned, sincere, and a man of unusual force, but the movement failed utterly. "Where did you attend church this morning?" one gentleman asked another at a hotel in London one Sunday. "I was at Frederic Harrison's Temple of Light." "And what did you find there?" "I found three persons and no

God." Where men lose the sense of devotional feeling which prompts the song of praise they lose also their power of spiritual appeal.

The college songs have value in the life of the university. They often embody a highly useful quality of college spirit. When the men in Cambridge sing "Fair Harvard," and the men at Yale sing "Bright College Years"; when the men at the University of California sing "The Golden Bear," and the men at Stanford sing "Hail, Stanford, Hail," the deeper note of loyalty to the institution and to all its splendid traditions is thereby struck.

When our brave men in blue stood shoulder to shoulder in some dark hour of the Civil War singing, "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord," that Battle Hymn of the Republic, they were nerved for the conflict which lay ahead. When Cromwell's Ironsides went forth on Marston Moor chanting, "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered," it was an earnest of spiritual victory. When those brave reformers under Martin Luther, pitting their strength against spiritual despotism, stood up and sang, "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott," the act of praise became a prophecy of the triumph they were destined to win. The spirit of loyalty is expressed and developed in such a song of aspiration. When the day is long and the strife hard, sing the Lord's song all the more. Sing the song of hope in that strange land where you find yourself, and the land may become no longer strange.

In the second place, the lips may be silenced by a change of belief. Many people feel that these are strange times upon which we have fallen. Where are the old standards to which men formerly submitted their questions as to a court of final appeal? When all Christians believed in the infallibility of the Church they had nothing to do but to accept what it said. It was easier then to sing the song of faith. When all Christians believed that the Bible was the infallible expression of the mind of God, every syllable of it, with no need for discrimination or appraisal in judging its various parts, the song of high confidence rose without a tremor. When some finished system of theology, strongly made, part dovetailing into part with absolute precision, was accepted without question, the mind and heart were left free to sing. But in these days, when the study of history and of literature, of science and of philosophy, has changed all this; in these days when every man is called upon to exercise his own godly judgment regarding these conflicting claims, and to do it at his own risk, some of the glad, confident songs of praise are hushed.

Not only the changed attitude in theology but the changing attitude in certain quarters touching man's moral freedom has silenced the song. "Heredity and environment have us bound hand and foot," men are saying. We act not as we choose but as we must. We are what we are by the operation of forces which we cannot control. Whatever is, had to be;

and whatever will be will be, whether we like it or not.

Gloomy, pessimistic determinism like this is not confined to a few sad-eyed philosophers shut up in a closet. It is being preached audaciously at the street corners and proclaimed from the housetops. Men know by heart "the parable of the soil," which is the parable of environment. They know that hard or stony or weedy soil may register its verdict against a harvest. They have not learned so well "the parable of the seed," where the inner life principle, be it wheat or tare, becomes the determining factor in the harvest. Here were wheat and tares sown in the same soil with varying results determined from within. But many are hanging out the flag of distress. "We are not free to choose. We are the tools of fate. We are caught and held within the grip of forces titanic, which may carry us to the bottom in spite of everything." This is not the mood for music — no song issues out of that temper.

The song of Christian enthusiasm has been hushed in some hearts by the changed ideals in the world of industry. There are men who claim that it is impossible to reconcile Christian ethics with the economic conditions under which so many of our fellows are compelled to live. They refuse, therefore, to sing on Sunday what they have no intention of practicing on Monday.

We are undoubtedly feeling the influence of more searching principles of right and wrong

action in corporate life. We live in the presence of finer and more exacting ideals touching the treatment of our fellows in the world of business. There was a time when a man might rapidly accumulate a fortune by methods legal, perhaps, but showing scant regard for the human values at stake and then turn around and play the rôle of "Lord Bountiful" in his showy philanthropies and be held up to the gaze of admiring youth for their applause. That day has gone. The picture does not awaken a thrill in the heart of modern society. Thoughtful men are insisting in downright fashion that fortunes must be won as well as given away by methods which harmonize with the higher ideals. The steps of a good man must be ordered by the Lord, not only in his private virtues and in the treatment of his family, but in the courses of action he pursues in commercial and in civic life. Because that task is hard, there are men who refuse to sing. They are unwilling to utter in any form the Christian ideal, since they propose to catch the nearest way to gain their ends. And many a Christian man is carrying a burden on his heart when he sees in business that which he feels powerless to alter — and that takes the joy out of his song.

What shall we say? The task of keeping the faith, of holding fast to Christian principle, and of singing the song of Christian aspiration, is in these days undoubtedly another and a harder task. To be as good as our grandfathers were

we shall have to be a great deal better in the application of Christian principles to everyday life. The changed attitude in the matter of religious belief, the changed conception of human nature resulting from the study of psychology and from a more scientific inquiry into the forces of heredity and environment, together with the emergence of more exacting ideals in the economic world, must, of necessity, modify our song.

But these things need not, they must not, silence it. The finer discrimination in the matter of belief, the fuller sense of all that is involved in that mystery we call personality, and the moral heroism required to make the six days of labor as holy as the seventh day of rest and worship, will only serve to bring out the finer accents in that music of the higher life. The very difficulty and vastness of our present undertaking will make the attack of the singers more sharply defined. The intricacy and the rich content of these problems which we face will make the harmony of the resultant music more complete and satisfying. The great volume of moral aspiration will rise from the hearts of resolute Christian men bent upon the coming of the kingdom of God in all these interests like the sound of many waters. The Lord's song is a song which can be sung, and must be sung, under any conditions where the children of God are compelled to live.

The song of aspiration is silenced in certain hearts by some cherished bit of evil. We read

in the Bible of a certain strong man who became a leader in Israel. He laughed at all the combinations of the enemies of his country's peace. He seized the lion which roared against him and rent it as if it had been a harmless kid. He carried off the gates of the heathen city of Gaza as if they had been the playthings of a child. He stands catalogued in the book of Hebrews with the heroes of the faith, who subdued kingdoms and wrought righteousness, waxed valiant in fight and turned back the armies of aliens.

But there came a time when he allowed his moral nature to sleep for a night in the lap of evil. And when he arose from that debauch he was shorn of his strength. He did not know how weak he was — "he wist not that the Lord had departed from him." He went out and shook himself as at other times, but when the Philistines came upon him he was powerless. They took him and bound him; they put out his eyes and compelled him to grind in the prison house as a common slave. He had done wrong and the Lord had departed from him. He could neither sing the Lord's song nor fight the Lord's battles nor do the Lord's work.

All these things were written for our instruction, as in a parable. No man's moral power is safe from the attacks of the Philistines unless it is guarded by sincerity of heart and by the strong defense of God's favor. The willful cherishing of an evil purpose, the easy compromise with some unrighteous method, the

bowing down of some section of the life to Satan in return for some small kingdom of this world will render any man as weak as a child. Eternal vigilance is the price of spiritual vigor. Truth in the inward parts is what each man must pay for force of character. It cannot be had on any other terms. If the Lord's song is to rise triumphantly from the lips it must spring from a heart where he reigns supreme.

We have seen the changed conditions which in many lives lower the pitch and reduce the volume of moral aspiration. But in a rightly ordered life these things are powerless to silence the song. The great moral imperatives are in no wise impaired by these altered conditions. Are reverence, trust and obedience toward the highest we know any the less obligatory? Is the demand for intelligent and persistent good-will toward our fellow-beings any the less peremptory? Is the moral tonic to be gained through prayer, through the thoughtful reading of Scripture, and from the cherished hope of life immortal any the less real? Are the joys of unselfish service and the satisfying fellowship of men of like aspirations with us any the less rewarding? All these precious values rest upon foundations which stand sure. The deep diapason in the Lord's song sounds forth to-day as rich and strong as it did when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy.

In whatever state you find yourself, in a land

familiar or in a land that is strange, sing your song of faith and hope and love! It will help you to live the life; others will hear your song and they will be helped. Order your life aright and you can sing the Lord's song anywhere and everywhere with a confidence sublime.

And as you go forth into the future, not knowing what a day may bring forth; as you move out upon an unknown continent of experience, take your harp with you and sing your song of aspiration and high resolve. In the face of whatever may come show yourself blithe, radiant, undaunted, and by his almighty aid you will transform that strange land into a land of promise.

> "So long thy power hath blest me, sure it still
> Will lead me on,
> O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
> The night is gone,
> And with the morn those angel faces smile
> Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile."

Sing it! Sing it with all your heart, and though for years you may wander and wonder, you will at last find yourself singing in some mansion of our Father's house.

XIV

THE USES OF DISAPPOINTMENT

"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord." — ISAIAH VI, 1.

XIV

THE USES OF DISAPPOINTMENT

IT had been a hard year for this young man. He was a warm-hearted hero worshiper; he was an ardent patriot; he honored the king. And now the king was dead!

The king had been a wise and good ruler who served his country well. He fortified Jerusalem, his capital city, by building towers at the valley gate and at the turning of the wall. He showed an effective interest in the physical well-being of his subjects — "he loved husbandry." He dug wells in the desert. He had much cattle in the low countries and on the plains. He caused vineyards to be planted on the slopes of Carmel. His reign was beneficent and he was greatly beloved.

But in some mysterious way this wise and good king contracted leprosy. He suffered through all the closing years of his reign from the slow, terrible inroads of that dread disease. Royal personage though he was, he was compelled by the stern requirements of Jewish law to live outside the city. He could not remain in his own capital. He had to reign by deputy. At last he died a victim of that terrible disease.

It was a sad shock and a grievous disappointment to all the people. But Isaiah, the coming prophet of his time, records a notable experience which came with that disappointment — "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord."

In the light of that statement let me indicate some of the possible uses of disappointment. The young man's hero worship passed over into a profounder faith. He had been thinking of Israel's welfare as bound up with the life and service of that good ruler. Now the king was dead and he must plan without Uzziah. And under the compulsion of that strange experience he saw the Lord high and lifted up, sitting upon his throne.

His moral outlook began to sweep a broader horizon. His trust in that which is seen and temporal rose into a clearer recognition of the immediate worth of that which is unseen and eternal. The very failure of those pleasant sources of expectation in his valley of delight compelled him to lift up his eyes afresh unto the hills, from whence cometh help. And looking up, he saw the Lord.

No one life, even though that life be kingly, is more than a single item, a solitary detail, in the working out of a plan destined in its final consummation to transcend our highest hopes. The man on whom so much depends may be removed, and then we must plan without him. But "after the death of Moses the Lord spake to Joshua." After the death of David, the best

king Israel ever had, the Lord brought the prophet Isaiah to the front. In the year that some religious leader, like Jonathan Edwards or Charles G. Finney or Dwight L. Moody, dies, the Lord develops fresh capacity in a score of other men impelled by the necessities of the changed situation to effort more resolute. The king is dead, long live the King of kings! He is alive and at work within this unfolding history for the accomplishment of his good pleasure. How the hearts of men would be emboldened did they rise more readily from the mood of hero worship into the vision of God!

"I come to you not with the enticing words of man's wisdom nor with excellency of speech" Paul said to the Corinthian Church, "but in demonstration of the spirit, that your faith may stand not in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." He put no slight on intellectual gifts. He was a well-trained man, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. He was a man of no mean ability — he wrote well-nigh a third of the New Testament with his own hand. He wrote the best hymn on love to be found in print. He made the strongest moral appeal on behalf of faith in immortality ever penned. He was a thoughtful, effective preacher of great truths. But he would have the faith of those men stand ever in the power of the divine spirit. In the year when they saw the human props to their belief fall away, he would have them see the Lord. Not in hero

worship, but in the vision of God are we to ground our hope.

In the second place, the young man saw that the divine providence includes and utilizes the dark days as well as the bright. We get into ruts. We find them comfortable, satisfying ruts. We run smoothly, like the farm wagon on a country road, because we are in that well-worn track. Then there comes a shift of circumstances which throws us out into a changed situation where we are compelled to wear down another track for the progress of our lives.

Here is a man who had gained a competence, but he loses it and finds himself struggling! Here is one who loses his health — he passes over in a year from the sweet unconsciousness of those days when he scarcely knew that he had any organs to the point where he feels that he is nothing but organs, all of them conspiring against his peace! Here is a craftsman thrown out of employment by some new invention which makes his trade unnecessary; now at fifty he finds himself no longer in demand! Here is a home where death has taken away the choicest member of the family! In every case the materials for happiness which remain seem broken and fragmentary. The regal fact is gone, and the reign of those beneficent forces which made life glad is at an end.

How differently men take such disappointments! Some look down in settled melancholy until they are prompted to end it all in suicide.

Others are brave — they look down, but in the spirit of the soldier. They regard themselves as pickets sent out upon their beats in that lonely country. They are unhappy as they pace to and fro in the dark and cold, but in somber resignation they stand guard until relieved by an order from headquarters. We cannot judge them harshly — it is one thing to rejoice in the goodness of God when everything is going one's way; it is another matter to hold that attitude when everything seems adverse.

But in that hard hour when the king died Isaiah looked up and saw the Lord. God was not dead. And whatever God allows in his own world cannot be so terrible but that his children may patiently build it into something which will express his deeper purpose and satisfy their hearts. That was what Isaiah saw in the hour of his disappointment. The king was dead, but this ardent patriot saw the nation moving ahead under other guidance, finding through its sense of loss some new form of expression for its deeper life. He saw that all things, the dark things as well as the bright, things easy and things hard, taken in their completeness and final outcome work together for good to those who are headed right.

God is not the God of the prosperous alone. Whole rooms in our Father's house are filled with those who fight the good fight, keep the faith and finish their course in a steady battle with adversity. God is not the God of sound health alone. He might have made us incapable

of suffering as granite blocks, but no one would regard that as a gain. The fact that he does not in his omnipotence instantly heal the sick who call in their distress indicates that in his mind there are greater values than physical fitness. The sick-bed, the invalid chair, the home of pain are sometimes the scenes of spiritual victory, of saintly disposition, of holy companionships, which become at once a rebuke and an inspiration to those who walk in fullness of health. The soul may sit in the ruins of former advantage and see the Lord with a clearness, a nearness and a confidence never experienced when those advantages stood about him in stately splendor. His account of his own changed lot would read like the word of the prophet — "In the year when all things went, I saw the Lord."

I am not wise enough to interpret adequately the hard, puzzling experiences which fall into our lives. No man is — the returns which might warrant such final effort are not yet in. The instruments for complete analysis are not in our hands. The meaning of a full half of earth's familiar experience shades off into a mysterious unknown. Clouds and darkness are round about him even though righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. We know in part — we see through a glass darkly.

But every added year of right living quickens our power of insight. We see that the divine purpose may include pain and sorrow within the scope of its plans for spiritual

nurture. The artists are in error when they clothe their angels ever in white. The messengers of the divine purpose come in gray; they come in black; they come in the ordinary dress of everyday life. They come with a diversity of operation engaged in their ceaseless effort to bring us to the point where we shall have seen and felt all that belongs to an entire humanity. God's unhurried purposes are not thwarted by some event which seems to us untoward. The comprehensive grasp of his providence holds many a sore disappointment as an obedient servant of his sovereign will. Look up and reflect! Look deep within your own soul and meditate upon the finer values! Study the meaning of that somber experience until your unfolding vision enables you to see the Lord!

In the third place, the young man's disappointment brought him a new sense of sympathy with his struggling fellows. Isaiah belonged to the fortunate class. He lived on the Avenue. He was possessed of wealth. He had an assured social position which gave him access to the Court and to the presence of the king. He was familiar with the customs and the costumes of fashionable society as he indicates in that later chapter where he rebukes the showy extravagance of the idle rich.

But through his own disappointment he came to feel a deeper sympathy with the wrongs and defeats suffered by the common people. He felt the stress of that poverty which is caused by selfish monopoly. "Woe unto them that

join house to house and field to field until there be no room" — no room for people of less ability to live human lives. He saw the evil wrought by those who mix their colors, confuse their standards, puzzle their own souls by their moral dexterity. "Woe unto them that put evil for good and good for evil, darkness for light and light for darkness, bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter."

He developed a new sense of sympathy for all those who suffer and fail through the selfishness of their fellows. His heart grew as the outward sources of satisfaction diminished. It is by virtue of experiences like these that sympathy attains its full stature.

Leland Stanford was governor of the state of California, and afterward a United States Senator from that commonwealth. He was the possessor of a princely fortune. He had an only child, and his mind was full of plans for the life of that boy. If that son should choose a business career the father's large and varied interests would open before him untold opportunities. If the son should incline to political life his father's experience and wide acquaintance in the councils of state and nation would give this youth a superb advantage. If the boy should choose a profession, his training, equipment and opportunity could be of the very best. He need not lack any good thing.

But in the midst of these loving anticipations cherished by his devoted parents the boy of twelve fell sick and died in sunny Italy. The

light went out of the lives of those parents. The joy faded from their hearts. He was their all. Their hopes for happiness as the sun should go down the western slope were all centered in that child. They had traveled far and wide; they had tasted the pleasures of social life at its best; they had reaped an abundant measure of visible success, and now the mere prospect of living on to spend the income of their many millions in loneliness seemed to them pain insupportable.

But in the year when the regal fact in their lives was taken away they saw the Lord. They entered profoundly into a new feeling of sympathy for all those lives which are baffled in their purposes. They stood ready to assume a vaster responsibility. The saddened father looked through the windows of his own desolate home upon the wide spaces of that commonwealth and said, "The children of California shall all be my children."

With the death of their own child came the purpose of founding and endowing for all time a splendid educational institution where young men and maidens might be trained, tuition free, for lives of honor and usefulness. Whether those parents would have caught the vision and have done their great work without the disappointment no one can say. The gift, however, sprang directly from that disappointment, as a memorial to their son. And now "Stanford University" is one of the most splendidly endowed institutions for higher learning in all the

world. Young people by the thousands from California, from all the states of the union, and from lands beyond the sea rise up and call the names of those parents blessed. The father and mother suffered grievous defeat in their own plans, but out of that pain was born a purpose in which nations may ultimately be blessed.

Blessed are they that mourn! The words are not meant to put a premium on sorrow. They indicate the honor and value which attaches to the capacity for grief. Blessed are they who can and do mourn. When the humane man sees his mother becoming old and feeble his heart is saddened. When that dear companion of his childhood dies he mourns his loss. The Modoc Indian sees his mother growing old and he shuts her up in a hut until she starves to death, or he quietly strangles her. He then goes out hunting — he does not mourn. Blessed are they that have capacity for sorrow.

Blessed also are they that mourn, for the eyes washed in tears have clearer vision for the needs of others. They have a clearer vision of the God of all comfort. I sat once in the home of a brother minister after his little daughter had died. We talked until the sun went down and the shadows fell around us. There in the darkness he opened his heart and told me how changed the world was without her. He felt a new tenderness and sympathy for all the people on earth who suffer. He felt that the little plot in the cemetery gave him a sense of

partnership in all the grief of the human race. He felt as if his whole left side had become a heart now tender with its warmer interest in the world's pain. "Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress." New additions are built on to these moral natures of ours when disappointment comes. We are increased that we may house that capacity for deeper feeling. Blessed are they that mourn! In the year that the light dies out of some earthly situation men see the Lord and feel a truer kindliness toward all his needy children.

The Son of man was not exempt. "He learned obedience by the things that he suffered." There is no painless education in the deep things of life. He "learned obedience" — it was not an original endowment, it was a spiritual achievement. He learned by the things he suffered, by entering personally into the profounder experiences of grief and pain.

Obedience to those laws of life which lie on the surface, fencing men off from the coarser forms of evil, may readily be acquired without pain and distress. But to learn obedience to the Father's will so that in Gethsemane or on Calvary one can still say, "Not my will but Thine be done," requires a deep, prolonged participation in the world's pain.

The world needs men and women who have seen the Lord in their hours of disappointment. It has work cut out for them which they alone can do. In one of the Old World galleries there is a picture of the Crucifixion where the artist

has painted a group of cherubs hovering about the head of the cross. They are examining the crown of thorns. One of them feels the sharp prick of the thorn and his face wears a curious look of surprise. It is all strange, for he has never felt the sting of pain. He wonders at the look of anguish on the face of Christ.

But at the foot of the cross are human figures entering into the meaning of it all. They have felt the prick of pain. They too have worn the crown of thorns and have felt the spear-thrust in the side. And when the gospel is to be carried to waiting nations God does not commission the innocent happy angels who hover in that upper air. With all their radiant holiness they never could bind up the broken-hearted or bring relief to the guilty through the great truths of the atonement. They could not carry comfort to a sinful, needy world. They are beautiful as they hang there in the gallery but incompetent for this lower world of need. The Lord of compassion sends forth men and women who have suffered at the foot of the cross to proclaim his gospel to the waiting nations.

"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw" —I saw what I had never seen before! My hero worship passed over into a profounder faith in the living God. My conception of Providence was broadened until it made provision for the spiritual value of sorrow and adversity. My heart was enlarged with sympathy awakening within me a new and deeper love for

all my fellows. The world's redemption is to be achieved by those tear-stained lives that have seen the light die out and then come again — a new and softer light by which they walk and work as it directs their hearts in the way of peace.

XV

THE RANK AND FILE

"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also and sent them." — LUKE X, 1.

XV

THE RANK AND FILE

THE message of our Christian faith cannot be written in a book. It cannot be displayed in some stately form of ritual. It must be embodied in a life. It can only find adequate expression in terms of personality.

It was so in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. "As the Father hath sent me, I send you," Jesus said. The Father projected his life and love into one country of the world by sending his Son. The Son projects his life and love into all countries by sending forth disciples, men who have caught his mood and spirit. He sent twelve, and then seventy, and then three thousand, and then other thousands, into every section of human interest whither he himself would come. This is the only abiding method. Many words are made print, but "The Word" which saves the world is made flesh and dwells among us, full of grace and truth.

Let me study with you the full significance of the sending out of the other seventy disciples who were not commissioned officers in the army of the Lord — they simply made up the rank and file. You will remember the character of

the men sent out. They were quiet, obscure men — not one of them is known to us by name. The names of the twelve are known everywhere. The greatest church in Christendom is St. Peter's at Rome. The court of the most powerful Christian nation is known as the Court of St. James. More children are named for St. John than for any other saint or sinner in history. And we have St. Andrew's Brotherhood, St. Bartholomew's Hospital and St. Matthew's School. We are told in the last book in the Bible that the names of those twelve apostles will finally be written on the foundation-stones of the city of God.

But none of you can give the name of any one of the other seventy. They are the quiet, untitled, almost unknown men and women whom Christ sends forth. They never do anything conspicuous. They will never sit on twelve thrones judging the tribes of Israel. They never get into the newspapers or into history. But they go about doing good, and their names, Jesus says, are "written in heaven."

They were numerous — seventy of them — the mere list of so many names would have taken too much space in this brief narrative, so the names were omitted. They symbolize that great multitude which no man can number, of all nations and peoples, kindreds and tongues, who, having aided in establishing righteousness in the earth, are destined to stand before the throne, clothed with white robes and with palms in their hands.

The other seventy were all laymen — "babes" in theological understanding. The twelve apostles were trained and set apart for their work by a high and holy ordination, but the other seventy were unofficial, untitled Christians, going forth to make the world better by living in it as followers of the Master. We have no words of depreciation for the great leaders, but in the last analysis the hope of the world lies in the work of those plain, everyday people who form the rank and file.

You may have seen a church which had a minister fifty feet high and several deacons almost as tall as the minister. The men in this small group were very conspicuous for their ability and zeal. The other members of the church were not more than five feet six or eight in their Christian activity. They did not attempt much — their time was taken up in watching those big trees of righteousness which towered aloft like sequoias. But presently the lofty minister in this church accepted a call elsewhere, the two great deacons moved away, and the poor church was left enfeebled.

You may also have seen another type of church where the minister was only five feet six or eight or possibly ten, but he had around him the other seventy, a considerable company of fellow Christians, who were equally tall. There were no giants among them, no sons of Anak, — just a devoted band of sizable, useful Christians of average build. But they were all accustomed to work and pray and live the life

— and in response to the efforts of that church, the kingdom of God was coming all the while with power and great glory. The hope of the race is bound up with the service of those inconspicuous, untitled Christians, here represented by the other seventy Jesus sent forth.

You notice also the method of their going. They went "two and two," for companionship and for mutual counsel. The whole method of our Christian undertaking is social, not solitary. The man who flocks off by himself has broken with the Christian method and spirit.

Two and two — it may be that husband and wife went together. If any of the other seventy were married, they could not have done better. And we may be sure that among the seventy there were women. We know that the last Christians to leave the Cross on that first Good Friday and the first Christians to reach the empty tomb on that first Easter morning, were women. Two and two — a man and his wife devoting their lives in sacred companionship to this service of the highest interests there are.

They went forth "as lambs among wolves." No teeth nor claws, no swords nor guns! They went as Paul went into Macedonia, a troubled region then and a troubled region now, with the gospel of peace. They went as Livingstone went into the heart of the dark continent, with no weapon but the great love in his own heart. They went as John G. Paton went among the cannibals of the South Sea, disarming their

opposition by the potent influence of his own unselfish devotion. They were simple, primitive Christians, who had never read "The White Man's Burden," nor caught the trick of backing up the offer of a higher life with gunpowder. They went, taking their lives in their hands, relying upon instruction and persuasion, kindness and self-sacrifice, for the spiritual victories they were set to win. "Lambs among wolves," kindness pitted against cruelty — this is the line of spiritual advance.

They had a definite purpose. They allowed nothing to distract or delay them in their appointed work. "Salute no man by the way," Jesus said. His word sounds almost curt. But when one has seen the endless salaaming and kotowing which make up a full-orbed oriental "salute," he sees at once the significance of the command. Ambassadors charged with a high errand will not allow themselves to be hindered by trivial social observances which eat up time and strength to no purpose. The other seventy were conscious of the importance of their mission and they went straight along about their august business, that they might bring peace to every house and heart.

They went as the forerunners and accredited representatives of the Christian mode of life. Jesus sent them "into every city and place whither He Himself would come!" They could not speak as he did, who spoke as never man spake, but they could tell something of the glad

tidings he had brought. They could not live as he lived, in whom neither Pilate nor all the ages since could find any fault at all, but they embodied some measure of his spirit in their bearing. He sent them as he sends us, to show the waiting world all we can of his truth and love; to someone you will be the best sample of Christian life he will ever be privileged to know intimately. It imposes a tremendous responsibility, but it is the method of the Master — "As the Father hath sent me, I send you."

This was their message — into whatsoever city or town they came, they were to say, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." It had come nigh because two Christians were there speaking the truth of the kingdom, embodying the spirit of the kingdom, living the life of the kingdom. The kingdom of God means the sway and rule of the divine spirit, and it was there in the lives of those two. By the subtle, irresistible power of spiritual contagion it would be communicated to many another life.

It was a great message! He did not send them forth to exhort the world to be a bit more decent and respectable outwardly. He outlined their task, making it vital, fundamental, permanent in character. "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" — they were to lift society to a higher loyalty, to a more exalted fellowship, to a more glorious destiny. This was the high command given to those untitled people who made up the other seventy.

What tremendous significance Jesus attached to the service of those plain people! We cannot all be major generals — it would be a calamity if we could. You never heard of a battle being won where the commissioned officers did all the fighting. If the officers were wise and brave they had their share of honor, but the issue turned finally upon the fidelity of those plain men without shoulder-straps, who count fours, march in platoons, obey orders and carry the day.

The same method holds in the war against evil. If this world is ever won to Christ, if a Christian civilization ever comes down out of heaven from God, beautiful as a bride adorned for her husband, it will result, not so much from the efforts of the major generals, who write big books, preach great sermons and inaugurate wide reforms, valuable as all this work may be. It will result mainly from the fact that the rank and file have kept step, marched close, fought bravely until evil was trampled in the dust. By plain, everyday Christian conduct in the shop and in the store, in the school and in the home, these varied forms of interest shall at last become kingdoms of our Lord.

We sometimes overlook the unmeasured worth of those quiet people who have made Christian duty their supreme choice. Their work is fully known only to him who seeth in secret. If Rev. Dr. James is called to a large city church, if St. Peter is made a bishop,

if St. John writes a book, everybody knows it. If Brother Bartholomew endows a college, or Brother Nathaniel founds a hospital, the newspapers all have it with headlines and pictures. This is all very well and the kingdom is advanced by such noble service.

But "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Do all speak with tongues? Are all workers of miracles?" There are many walking in what Paul called "an excellent way," whose service is altogether simple. They cannot speak with the tongues of men and angels; they do not understand all mysteries and all knowledge; they cannot exercise faith that would move mountains, but they can love. They can suffer long and be kind. They can act the part of unselfishness and not be puffed up. They can hope and endure, they can bear and believe all things and thus move along that great highway of spiritual usefulness which "never faileth."

Moses once uttered a prayer for religious democracy. "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets." His hope is in process of fulfillment. The Lord gives the word, great is the company of them that publish it. The other seventy went everywhere proclaiming the kingdom. They are doing the same thing to-day. Here is a man who hears a sermon and goes home to preach it over again to his sick wife — he preaches it better because he leaves out the non-essentials, using only those parts which are vital. Here is a woman who repeats

the message to her husband who is at work, on the street car perhaps, and could not come. Here is one who sees some passage of Scripture shine with fresh meaning and he goes out to impart it to a friend or to a group of children. Thus the gospel is preached far and wide by those who feel its power and then pass it on, according to the method of the unordained seventy. May the Lord's blessing rest richly upon all the Lord's people who have in this unofficial way become prophets.

You may be tempted sometimes to feel that because you march in the ranks and wear no sword, you are lost in the crowd. You may feel that among so many you will not be missed if you should withhold your measure of service. You are mistaken. When an experienced director is leading a great orchestra in the rendition of some splendid composition, his trained ear detects the slightest omission. The lack of a few notes from the oboe at one point, the absence of a few taps on the tympanum, the failure to bring in those softer tones of flute or harp would mar for him the completeness of the symphony. And that rich volume of tone which comes from the simultaneous playing of many violins would not be secured for him by half the number of violins, each one playing twice as loud. He listens with the ear of an expert detecting the slightest omission.

When we assemble to render to God a service of worship, he to whom the service is offered, he whose spirit directs it, notes the slightest

omission. The minister may fail to see your empty seat, but the Father's eye would note the absence of any one of his children. The people may not know whether you prayed before you came or not, but each cold and prayerless heart means a definite omission in the completeness of the service the Lord had expected. We are all needed, minister and choir, ushers and sexton, each one doing his best, and the other seventy coming in that the volume of praise may be like the sound of many waters, a veritable river of inspiration making glad the city of God.

The results of the mission of the untitled seventy were significant. They returned again with joy saying, "Lord, the devils were subject unto us through thy name." They had won notable victories over the forces of evil. Sick people had been healed; men wild and foolish in their religious notions had been instructed until they became sane and useful; men held in the tight grip of wrongdoing had been released and reclaimed — they were now free and brave in the cause of righteousness; peace had come to many a house and many a heart where the good news of the kingdom had been proclaimed. And all this was accomplished by those plain people who found the forces of evil subject to them when they made their approach in the name and in the spirit of Christ.

Jesus rejoiced with them in the high success of their undertaking. "In that hour Jesus

exulted in spirit"—it is the only instance where we read that he "exulted"—and said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth." Then he spoke in the most sanguine terms as to the outcome of all such movements of the plain people set upon the coming of the kingdom of God. "I saw Satan falling from heaven like lightning!" He gave thanks that God had revealed himself, not so much to the wise and prudent as to those simple, childlike people who yielded themselves in uncalculating devotion to his service. Then he turned to the privileged twelve, and said, "Blessed are the eyes which see what you see," the moral power of the common people possessed by the spirit as here symbolized in the success of the other seventy. Kings and priests had desired to see these things and had not seen them.

How reassuring it all is! How prophetic of ultimate victory! The great moral movements of the common people, when they become fired with a passion for righteousness, are a testimony to the presence of the Holy Spirit among us. He is here resident, powerful, efficient, bringing every thought into captivity to the spirit that was in Christ. He is here working his own sovereign purpose and will, the living energy of the living God. He is here in all these nobler yearnings and broodings, in all these finer aspirations and better impulses in the hearts of men. He finds us often slow to respond, for our ears are dull and our hearts

gross, but his work goes on until there comes a great awakening of moral determination, of spiritual resolve, of high insistence upon those principles whose right it is to rule. Then the eye of the Master sees the reign of evil falling swiftly to its doom.

It is neither possible nor desirable that everyone should sit on the right hand or the left hand of the Son of man. It is not ours to get nor his to give — it shall be given to those for whom it has been prepared. But it is possible and desirable that everyone should drink his cup of sacrifice and be baptized with his spirit of devotion.

Like the Jews of old, everyone can build over against his own house some part of the perfect world. You can build into those little children a set of holy and beautiful desires. You can build into that growing boy, whose confidence you enjoy, some ennobling habits, some sterling prineiples, some inspiring truths. You can build into the heart of that man at your side a deep impression of the worth and sincerity of your own Christian life. You can build into your own street another Christian home, radiating its atmosphere of peace and love. You can build into your church a record of Christian usefulness which will reassure and inspire every fellow-member. And while you are doing that, day by day and night by night, you are becoming a pillar in the temple of redeemed society to go no more out. You are helping to rear that great structure of service

and of recovery, which shall house and redeem the enduring interests of the race.

We feel here in our country at this time a ground swell of Christian democracy. However we may distrust the showy words of some of its self-appointed leaders, however futile and visionary we may regard some of its impossible programmes, there is no manner of doubt but that the plain people are firmly set upon the rule of certain principles of righteousness which have to do with the coming of the kingdom. The other seventy, who work mainly with their hands, have not been receiving an equitable share of the good things they helped to create. The untitled, unprivileged majority has been denied that fuller participation in the general prosperity to which it is entitled. And the smaller company of privileged people have had more than was good for them. We have too much poverty and too much luxury for a Christian civilization. We have too many people in our cities who live without working and altogether too many who work without living. Now the other seventy are rising up in a mighty insistence upon a more democratic spirit in the control of great industries, upon a more humane regard for the higher values at stake in the huge business of production and upon a more equitable distribution of the good things of life.

In many quarters the profound significance of this unrest seems to be hid from the wise and prudent. It is being revealed to those

simple, straightforward natures who have eyes to see and ears to hear. There is a will of God to be recognized and realized in that big world where men buy and sell, employ and are employed, quite as much as in these sacred precincts set apart for song and prayer. Let the will of God be done!

"Remember the week day to keep it holy," someone has said. It is a divine command; it has behind it all the authority of Sinai. The broken and defeated lives which have suffered not only economic but moral loss, through the weary grind which has robbed them of the zest and relish of life, are offering a challenge to the moral forces of the country. It is a challenge which must be met. The people are demanding the moralization of industry, the rightening of civic affairs in the interest of the many and the introduction of the spirit of Christian brotherhood into all these forms of social contact. And when that insistence, which is Christian at heart, makes itself felt, as it surely will, I believe that again the great heart of Christ will rejoice in seeing the selfish forces of evil overthrown by the work of the other seventy.

It is a vaster movement than the winning of some particular victory over a few of the evils of the world. When the seventy made their report Jesus exulted, and then added, "Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not that the devils are subject unto you. Rejoice rather that your names are written in heaven." The success of

an hour, the winning of a single skirmish, the driving back of the forces of wrong at some particular point was not nearly so significant as the permanent enrollment of those men and women as citizens of that kingdom which is an everlasting kingdom.

Good men may win a victory to-day and another to-morrow and then on the third day suffer defeat. Yet all the while because their wills have been brought into harmony with the will of God, they will be in the full enjoyment of celestial recognition; they will be moving ahead toward the great fulfillment when all these kingdoms of human interest shall become kingdoms of our Lord. Rejoice above all that "your names are written in heaven," that your fundamental purpose is to serve him who shall reign until he has put all things under his feet.

It seems that nothing moved the heart of Christ to exult as did the return of the seventy, singing their song of victory and bearing the marks of service. No other sight so moves the heart of the world. A friend of mine once described the scene he witnessed in Washington at the close of the Civil War. He was on the grandstand when the armies of Grant and Sherman passed in review. He saw the victorious hosts march down Pennsylvania Avenue. He described the intense interest of the people. They were eager to see Grant and Sherman and all the other officers whose names had become household words in the North. When any one of those men appeared and was recognized, the

crowd went wild. They shouted and cheered until the whole city rang with joy.

But there was something more significant and more sacred than all this. When the conspicuous leaders had passed, there came the tramp and tread of the common soldiers. Then the crowd grew strangely quiet. Here were the men who did not go on horseback. They walked; they ate the hardtack; they dug the ditches; they slept on the ground, suffering from fever and malaria. They marched out on the field stiff and sore, to be shot at, knowing that many of them would fill the trenches of the dead. They kept right along, doing those plain things until the war was ended, the slaves freed and the union preserved. The people did not know their names; they could not always read the letters on the flag; the men might belong to a regiment from Maine or they might be from California. They were the untitled seventy, the dusty, worn and weary men who had been doing their duty in such heroic fashion that the forces of evil were subject unto them. There had been glad cheers for the generals — now there were sacred tears of loving appreciation for the common soldiers.

You cannot all be major generals. You cannot all ride at the head of the procession. You cannot all be apostles and have churches at Rome, or world-wide brotherhoods named after you. But there is no life here which may not catch the spirit of Christ, enroll himself under the banner of Christ and by the use-

ful service he renders cause the Saviour to rejoice when he sees him coming up to render an account of the warfare he has waged against the powers of evil. May God help us to so live that our names too may be written in heaven and that Christ may thank the Lord of heaven and earth when he sees us pass before him in the great review.

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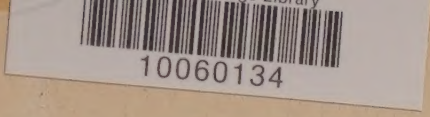
1862-1950.

The quest of life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